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AN HISTORICAL INQUIRY

INTO SOME OF

THE CHIEF PARALLELISMS AND CONTRASTS BETWEEN CHRISTIANITY

AND THE

RELIGIOUS SYSTEMS OF THE ANCIENT WORLD.

With special reference to prevailing Difficulties and Objections.

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CHAPTER I.

Varieties of Religious Thought among the Hindus.

Ἐν τῇ σοφίᾳ τοῦ Θεοῦ οὐκ ἔγνω ὁ κόσμος διὰ τῆς σοφίας τὸν Θεόν.

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Alexander's expedition to India.

THE European who first fought his way across the passes leading to the north of India was Alexander the Great. As early as the summer of 327 B.C. his veterans rested one whole month upon the banks of the Hydaspes. But although an opportunity was thus afforded to the band of scientific Greeks, who joined his expedition, for investigating the religions of the Panjáb and for studying the peculiar genius of the vanquished, the reports which they have left us on these questions are extremely meagre and uncritical. The honour of unlocking that mysterious treasure-house in which the literary wealth of India had been hoarded up from prehistoric ages was reserved for other conquerors.

Nor, if Aristotle had himself attended his heroic pupil, is it likely that our knowledge of the primitive history of Hindustan would be materially augmented. Doubtless an experienced eye, like the Stageirite's, would have noted with especial interest and intelligence the aspects of the physical world thus opened to the eager gaze of the Hellenes. The grandeur of the mountain-scenery, culminating in the snow-crowned summits of the

Hindu-Kush, the richness of the foliage, the fertility of the soil, the mighty forests, the luxuriant rivers, the prodigious size and the grotesque proportions of the animals and plants, would all in turn have furnished topics for reflection and comparison to the mind of such a traveller. He would have probably assisted also in determining the physiological characteristics of the native population, and while remarking, as did others, the dyed beard, the tunic of white linen, the ornaments of gold and ivory, the timid air and almost feminine softness of the men, their passionate love of music, juggling and gymnastics, have enabled us to speak more definitely in reference to their moral elevation and the nature of their intellectual training. He might further have investigated more at length the contrasts which already marked the different orders of Hindu society,—such, for instance, as the distribution into castes, or the specific points of difference then observable between the courtly and accomplished 'Brachman,' and the anchoret who mortified the flesh amid the silence and discomforts of the jungle. Nay, it is conceivable that a mind which mastered the whole compass of Hellenic wisdom, might have been able to anticipate some triumphs of the modern ethnologist; he might have traced those common elements of thought and feeling, language and mythology, which, binding Greek and Persian and Hindu together, pointed backwards to the early dawn of civilisation and the cradle of the human family.

Unhistorical character of the Hindu mind.

Yet, high as were the expectations not unnaturally raised by Alexander's expedition, one pecu-

liarity in the mental constitution of Hindus prevented both the ancients and ourselves from gaining any accurate knowledge of their aboriginal condition. Rich as their literature is found to be in other products, it has never given birth to formal histories[1]; and what is even more remarkable, the Hindu scholar is deficient in those very qualities which indicate the presence of historic consciousness. He gazes with a cold, if not contemptuous, spirit on the vanities of sense and time, and therefore is disposed to treat all questions of chronology with arrogant indifference. He lives, or rather dreams away his lifetime, in the midst of intellectual problems, labouring hard to measure the immeasurable, to circumscribe the absolute. Compared with such recondite speculations, every incident of life is a mere ripple on the boundless ocean, as fleeting, as phenomenal. What now is, may, for aught he cares, have been a thousand times already, and may frequently come round afresh. The object of his interest is reunion with Divinity, a reabsorption of the finite soul into the primal source of being; and that destiny, according to the various creeds of Hindustan, implies obliviousness in reference to all earthly

[1] The only exception is the *Rája Taringíni*, a quasi-historical account of Kashmir; and even this, according to Prof. Wilson (*Asiatic Researches*, XV. 1 sq.), dates no higher than the XIIth century after Christ. We are elsewhere told by the same authority, that the ancient (Brahmanical) records of India have scarcely enabled us to determine more than one important historical fact, viz. the identity of Chandragupta, one of the kings of Magadha, with the Sandracottus, or Sandracoptus, of the Greek writers. The reign of the latter monarch began about 312 B.C.; whereas if any credit were conceded to the list of dynasties preserved in the Puráńas, this event would have to be placed 1200 years earlier (Lassen, *Indische Alterthumskunde*, I. 501, Bonn, 1847).

knowledge, and entire abstraction from all shadows and illusions of the past.

Now, whether it is exclusively owing to the operation of such feelings that the literary monuments of Hindustan are seldom found to be available for historical purposes, I do not venture to determine. But this may be affirmed with certainty, that if the annals of India were less blank and barren, modern Europe would have been far less bewildered than it is by theories and counter-theories. Here, as in like cases, where the evidence is dim and fragmentary at the best, imagination is too often suffered to take wing, and even to usurp the throne of history.

Extreme theories on the date of Hindu civilisation.

On one side we have seen a race of orientalists so dazzled by the brilliance of their own discoveries, so intoxicated by the novelty and beauty of the region into which they were the first to penetrate, that India is for them the fountain of all wisdom and the mother of all civilisation. Glowing with this fancy, they are anxious to persuade us that in ages long before the birth of Moses or Sesostris, a religious system which has since remained well-nigh immutable, was fabricated by the genius of some Hindu rishi on the banks of the Yamuná, or in the plain of the Ganges; and that thither we must go if we desire to find the master-key which can alone explain the mysteries of later systems, which alone can solve the problems of our spiritual nature, and give back to western states the uncorrupted form of Christianity[1].

[1] See, for instance, Holwell's *Original Principles of the ancient Bramins*, &c. (Lond. 1779). This writer glories in the name of 'orthodox Christian Deist' (p. 91), and claims direct affinity with the Hindus,

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On the other side it has been vigorously contended, for example in the school of Niebuhr[1], that the civilisation of India is both modern and derived—a thing of yesterday, if we compare it with the mental history of some other nations. The Hindus, when vanquished by the troops of Alexander, and described by Megasthenes, had (so these writers argue) recently emerged from utter barbarism; they were kinsmen of the 'black and savage Indians,' whom we meet with in the pages of Herodotus; while Sanskrit literature, for which the opposite school asserted an unfathomable antiquity, had borrowed all its choicer portions from Greek treatises imported by the Arabs in the middle ages.

True state of the case.

But truth, we now are justified in stating, was equidistant from these two extreme positions.

who 'from the earliest times have been an ornament to the creation,' on the ground that both he and they are strict monotheists. He deems the Brahmanical religion the first and purest product of a supernatural revelation. The Hindu scriptures, he supposes, contain, 'to a moral certainty, the original doctrines and terms of restoration, delivered from God himself, by the mouth of his first-created Birmah, to mankind, at his first creation in the form of man' (p. 71). According to Holwell's theory, our blessed Lord was a reappearance of 'Birmah,' but the exact substance of His teaching can be no longer ascertained, owing to grievous corruptions and disfigurements which it was made to undergo at the hands of the apostles and their followers.

[1] 'This opinion concerning the antiquity of Indian civilisation, which has sprung up especially within the last forty years [Niebuhr wrote as far back as 1830], is, indeed, spreading farther and gaining stability. I cannot decide upon it, and cannot say what it is founded upon; but from the assurance of a very competent Englishman, I believe that people will soon come to the conviction, as some highly competent persons have already done, that all the alleged knowledge of the Indians does not by any means belong to the centuries of Moses and Sesostris, to which it has been assigned, but that the greater part of their literature belongs to the middle ages; that for the most part it is borrowed from the Greek, through the medium of Arabic translations,' &c.: *Lectures on Ancient History*, I. 138.

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When the first intoxication of the orientalist was over; when the monuments of ancient India were decyphered by a race of scholars more sagacious than a Holwell and less credulous than a Voltaire; when fresh materials had been disinterred in various quarters, and a flood of light had broken unexpectedly into this field of literature from China and Nepál on one side, and Ceylon upon the other; random guesses were exchanged for logical deductions, and philosophizing tamed or baffled by the stubborn strength of facts. It was now obvious, that if Hindus were not historians their religion had a history; that this religion, far from being uniform and stationary in its character, had undergone a series of important changes, not to say of revolutions; that instead of being a spontaneous product of the soil of Hindustan, and therefore unconnected in its growth with other ancient systems, the original Hinduism bore in every feature the most legible indications of a northern parentage, and indications which connect the elements of its mythology, as well as of its speech, with other sections of the 'Indo-European' family.

The phases of religious thought which the immediate object of the present work has made it necessary for me to examine, are reducible under three descriptions:

1. Védaism, or the Vaidic religion.
2. Bráhmanism.
3. Schools of Hindu philosophy, including Buddhism.

§ 1. *Védaism.*

It is now almost universally admitted that to ascertain the basis of Hindu civilisation, or rather, to become acquainted with the earliest utterances of the Hindu religion, we must have recourse directly to the class of sacred books entitled Védas[1]. Here I take my stand, and without entering very far into particulars either as to the theology which they contain, or the precise date of their composition, I shall try to give the reader such a general view of both as for the present purpose will be found sufficiently approximate.

Two remarks are necessary at the outset.

First, I shall exclude from this inquiry all reference to the aboriginal (*i. e.* non-A'ryan) tribes of India. The Védas have been ever the possession of one dominant race[2],—a race which, having

[1] See Colebrooke's Essay *On the Védas, or Sacred Writings of the Hindus*, first published in the *Asiatic Researches*, VIII. 377—497. They are four in number, and are denominated the Rig-Véda, the Yajur-Véda, the Sáma-Véda, and the Atharva-Véda. The Sanskrit text of the Rig-Véda is being edited by Prof. Max Müller: it has also been translated in part by Prof. Wilson, and entirely by M. Langlois. The White Yajur-Véda is edited, with a translation, by Prof. Weber of Berlin. The Sáma-Véda is edited, with a translation, first by Mr Stevenson, and secondly by Prof. Benfey of Göttingen. The fourth Véda, though some of its materials are more recent, is regarded by the Hindus themselves as of co-ordinate authority. It has just been edited by Prof. Roth and Mr Whitney. Supplementary works in illustration of the texts of the Védas have also been published. Especially valuable is the *Nirukta*, an original glossary and commentary which has been also edited by Prof. Roth: Göttingen, 1852.

[2] On the origin of the Hindus and their gradual occupation of India, see Lassen, *Ind. Alterth.* I. 511 sq. They distinguished themselves from other ancient tribes by the name A'rya = 'noble,' 'well-born,' a designation originally belonging also to the Medes (Ἄριοι, Herod. VII. 62), and afterwards preserved in the district *Ariana*, and in the modern *Ari* and *Arikh*, applied by the Armenians to the natives of Media. See further illustrations in Lassen, I. 6 sq., and Dr Donaldson's *New Cratylus*, pp. 118, 119, 2nd ed. The former of

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crossed the Indian Alps at some remote period, was gradually diffused into the Panjáb, and ultimately over a large portion of the whole Peninsula. Who and what was the 'barbarian' (mléchchha) they drove out before them; who and what the abject serf, or Śúdra, they had forcibly converted to their own religion, are extraneous questions, interesting in themselves but not admissible within the limits of the present survey[1].

Secondly, I ought to mention that in forming an estimate of the Védas, my materials have been gathered from the oldest portion of those treatises, the Védas proper, and not from Bráhmańas and Upanishads, in which the Vaidic doctrines are idealised and systematically developed by later hands[2]. For although many of these productions are said to breathe the spirit of the Védas, and although some of them may fairly claim, on philological and other grounds, a very high antiquity, it is impossible with our present knowledge to

these authorities asserts (p. 511) that we find no traces of their foreign extraction in the ancient literature of the Hindus themselves; but he is here not quite accurate, as Weber pointed out in his *Indische Studien*, 2tes Heft, 1850, p. 165.

[1] See *Appendix* I. at the end of this Part.

[2] These treatises are (1) the Bráhmańas, commentaries partly liturgical and partly theological in their character, containing, it would seem, a full development of the Brahmanical system, and (2) the Upanishads, a kind of supplement to other sacred books. Speaking generally, each Véda may be said to consist of two parts, the Mantras, or prayers, and the Bráhmańas, or precepts: Colebrooke, as above, pp. 387, 388 (cf. also *Des Védas*, par M. J. B. Saint-Hilaire, pp. 10, 11, Paris, 1854). All the Bráhmańas are believed in point of time to lie between the Védas on the one side, and the heroic poems on the other; and Professor Wilson, arguing from internal evidence, seems to have made it not improbable that one of the number, the Aitaréya Bráhmańa (which, however, is not, he maintains, an integral part of the Rig-Véda) was written as far back as the sixth century before the Christian era: see *Journal of the Asiatic Society*, XIII. 105.

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The chief gods of the Védas.

determine their exact position in reference to the sacred texts which they interpret.

Of the documents which Hindus have always held in special veneration, the Rig-Véda is the first and foremost. It contains as many as 1017 'mantras,' *i. e.* canticles and prayers. These, with slight exceptions, are *religious* in their character. About one half of them are found to be addressed either to Indra, the god of light[1], or Agni, the god of fire[2]; who therefore occupy the foremost place in the mythology of the Védas. The next divinity to which a certain prominence appears to be awarded is Varuńa, the god of water; but none of these can be distinguished absolutely from a multitude of other gods, which either act as representatives of the chief divinities, and so are Indra, Agni and Varuńa with different names, or else appear as deifications of some single aspect in the powers and processes of nature. Trinity or triad there is none[3]. Much less can we observe among the ancient

[1] Indra, the Hindu Jupiter, is not unfrequently styled 'lord of heaven,' (divaspati = diespiter). The name 'Indra' is itself of doubtful origin, meaning either (1) 'blue,' (an epithet of the firmament), or (2) 'the illuminator,' or (3) 'the giver of rain:' Wuttke, *Gesch. des Heidenthums*, II. 242, Breslau, 1853. His attributes, though for the most part terrible in their manifestation, are essentially *creative* or *productive*, and sometimes absolutely *beneficent;* as when he is said to chase away evil spirits from the clouds, or send refreshing showers upon the earth, in spite of the malevolence of Vritra or Ahi, the demon who withholds them.

[2] The Agni (= Ignis) of the Védas is not so much the god presiding over the element of fire, as the element of fire itself, considered partly as the vivifying principle of vegetation, and partly as a *destructive agent*. 'Agni est die dem Indra gegenüberstehende Naturmacht: Indra erzeugt das Leben, Agni verzehrt es.' Wuttke, *Ibid.* p. 241 : cf. however, Prof. Wilson, *Rig-Véda*, Vol. I. 'Introd.' p. xxvii.

[3] Those writers who labour to establish that the Hindus have worshipped a triad of divinities from the very earliest period, give the second or third place in it to Varuńa (Οὐρανός): Wuttke, *Ibid.* p. 243. He is, in their view, the *preserving* and *directing* agent of the Vaidic system, the sphere

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hymns of India a complete and systematic theogony. The Vaidic gods are for the most part isolated beings, shadowy and impersonal energies, as multiform in character and manifestation as the elements with which they are connected, not to say identified. The earliest grouping of them into a system must be dated from the subsequent period[1], when the image of one, holy, personal Creator being broken more and more, and fading more and more completely from the Hindu mind, it was attempted to regain the thought of unity, which man was sadly conscious he had lost, by calling to his aid the light of metaphysics and the generalisations of natural philosophy.

How far the idea of unity was retained.

The doctrine of one great First-Cause was not indeed, as we shall see hereafter, absolutely banished from the heart of bards and rishis; yet their extant hymns should satisfy the most incredulous that the idea of God as one, supreme, and spiritual, never formed a prominent article in the early creeds of India. It retired far-off into the background. It seldom operated as a principle of life. It was the feeble and expiring echo of an older and a purer revelation; and even where it shewed its power at all, where Indra for the moment was absorbed completely by some brighter and more spiritual being, the God of whom such visions preached was not a thinking, willing, loving Spirit, personal and

of his operation lying between those of Indra and Agni. It deserves to be further noted, that as far back as the Védas, sexual distinctions were attributed to the gods. Each of the three leading divinities is attended by a wife, who reflects his own special energy:—Indráńí, Varuńáńí, Agnáyí.

[1] 'In der Vêdischen Götterlehre findet sich kein System, obwohl *Indra* schon der mächtigste der Götter ist:' Lassen, I. 768. He then sketches the oldest systematic representations as we find them in the *Nirukta*.

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self-conscious, ruling over nature as His work and as the Father of the spirits of all flesh, but rather a great That[1], a neuter abstract, separable from the world of matter in idea, but not in essence; spiritualised indeed, but spiritualised, ennobled, deified by the poetic faculty of the worshipper. He was a nature-god, and not the God of nature.

Growth of Hindu polytheism:

1. Accordingly if we proceed to analyse the psychological peculiarities, which tended to project that early creed of the Hindu, the point which strikes us most is the profound devotion he had always paid to natural phenomena. This tendency he manifested in common with all nations of remote antiquity; for though we cannot trace the A'ryan backwards to his haunts in central Asia, nor speak positively of the effect produced upon him by the savage scenery of those regions he had traversed in the course of his migrations, it is certain that on crossing the Hindu Alps he bowed at once in adoration of the new and beauteous world to which he was transplanted. The earthly bias of the spirit had received fresh impulses; the witchery exercised upon the senses was entire and irresistible. How potent were such impulses, how absolute such fascination in the other tribes of western Asia, may be gathered from the noble protest of the patriarch: 'If I beheld the sun when it shined, or the moon walking in brightness, and my heart hath been secretly

[1] The Sanskrit word (Tad) is literally *That.* And the same idea was in all probability expressed by the mystic monosyllable Ôm (aum), by which the hymns of the Védas were uniformly prefaced. Some writers, referring the three letters to a triad of the elements, explain *a* of Agni (fire), *u* of Varuńa (water), and *m* of Marut (wind): but the true etymology of the word appears to be suggested by the old Persian 'avam' (=aum), meaning 'That:' see Lassen, I. 775, n. 3.

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enticed, or my mouth hath kissed my hand; this also were an iniquity to be punished by the judge; for I should have denied the God that is above' (Job xxxi. 26—28). And like the patriarch in sensibility, though not in fear and reverence, were the authors of the sacred books of Hindustan. The 'golden-handed' sun, dispensing as the lord of heaven his gifts of radiance and fertility; the starry firmament, inspiring awe and deepening wonder; the freshness of the morning and the calm of evening twilight, whispering in man's heart of supernatural genii; season following season, and one element commingling with another; the scorching wind, the lightnings flashing forth in majesty and armed with speedy vengeance, rain and dew and drought,—these all excited in their turn the sentiments of pain or pleasure, joy or sadness, confidence or apprehension. All were felt to indicate the presence of invisible powers, at peace or else at enmity with man, and therefore recognised as objects worthy of his prayers [1]. Such veneration of the elements may not indeed have consciously involved the worshipper at first in a denial of God's sovereignty. He may have read in them the tokens, symbols, agents of a spiritual Intelligence. The harmony of natural laws, the wondrous and majestic revolution of the stars and planets, most of all the glorious element of light from which the A'ryan borrowed the generic name [2] of his divinities, may

[1] 'It is the peculiar character of the Indian mythology to combine a gigantic wildness of phantasy, and a boundless enthusiasm for nature, with a deep mystical import, and a profound philosophic sense.' F. von Schlegel, *Phil. of Hist.* p. 154, Lond. 1847.

[2] Déva, *nom.* dévas (= *deus*, θεός, Goth. *tius*, A. S. *tiw*) is derived from the Sansk. *deva*, 'luminous,' 'resplendent' (cf. *sub divo*);—an etymology

have, at least to elevated minds, suggested other and far higher spheres, of which the present world is only a distorted copy and a feeble adumbration. Yet ere long a change came over men's ideas; the golden thread was broken which connected 'the invisible things of God,' His power, His righteousness, His personality, His fatherhood, with objects that solicit and bewitch the senses. Popular imagination ultimately believed its own allegories, and not only so, but construed them according to the letter. The mythe became an object not of fancy but of faith; and the relations of natural and supernatural being thus inverted and obscured, the law was substituted for the Legislator, and the Giver hidden from men's eyes by the effulgence and the multiplicity of His gifts.

its complete develop-ment.

How far pantheistic.

In other words, the Védas, taken as a whole, reveal to us an aspect of religious feeling, always bordering upon pantheism, often passing quite across the border. Wheresoever in the world around him the Hindu observed extraordinary manifestations

which of itself suggests the leading feature of Hindu polytheism. Light, accordingly, became the aptest symbol of the Divine Being. Thus the *Gáyatri*, or holiest verse of the Védas, is addressed to the sun-god, and contains the following passage among others: 'Let us meditate on the adorable light of the divine sun (Savitri): may it guide our intellects. Desirous of food, we solicit the gift of the splendid sun (Savitri), who should be studiously worshipped. Venerable men, guided by the understanding, salute the divine sun (Savitri) with oblations and praise.' *Asiat. Researches*, VIII. 400: cf. Wuttke, II. 260—262, where other evidence is adduced to shew that the sun was at first regarded as an image in the visible world of what the supreme Essence is in the world invisible. 'Perhaps,' says Ritter (*Hist. of Ancient Philosophy*, I. 92, Oxf. 1838), 'there is nothing more instructive in Indian archæology than (so to express ourselves) the *transparency* of their mythology, which permits us to perceive how, with a general sense of the divine, the coexistence of a special recognition thereof in the separate phenomena of nature was possible, and how out of the conception of the one God, a belief in a plurality of gods could arise.'

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of the brilliant or the beautiful, the barren or prolific, the sombre or the terrible; wherever the action of the elements was such as to produce extraordinary effects upon himself, his children, or his property, he betrayed the consciousness of his dependence by some special act of homage. He acknowledged in such powers the presence of divinity; he called the influence which affected him or his a *déva* ('deus'); it was pregnant for the time with a divine or diabolic efficacy, and therefore it became a fitting object of desire or dread, of adoration or of deprecation, according to the aspects it assumed in reference to the worshipper. Hence, also, every province of creation was soon peopled by spiritual energies, all varying in their character with human hopes and fears, with human interests and passions. Nay, so far was the Hindu impelled in this direction that he deified the sacrifice itself [1], from which he hoped to profit; he worshipped his own offering, he worshipped the solemn form of words by which his offering was accompanied.

The Véda-gods all wanting in individuality.

But although these objects had been each invested by imagination with a kind of personality, the *dévas* of the Hindu populace, throughout the Vaidic period, were little more than formless powers and colourless abstractions. Human properties, it is true, were frequently ascribed to them: it was

[1] For example, the hymns comprising one whole section of the Rig-Véda are addressed to Soma, the milky juice of the moon-plant (asclepias acida), which the worshipper had learnt to deify. Thus, in Langlois's translation (Tome I. p. 174) the following is the last petition of such a prayer: 'Dieu fort, ô Soma, que ta divine prudence nous accorde la part de richesses (que nous désirons)! Combats pour nous; personne ne peut lutter contre toi. Tu es le maître de la force, et règnes sur les deux partis: donne-nous la supériorité dans la bataille.' This deification of the Soma is still more prominent in the Sáma-Véda.

believed that even gods are ultimately mortal, and can only purchase an exemption from the common lot by drinking of the potent *amrita*[1], the draught of immortality; yet how vague was the impression made by this or that particular god we gather from the fact that the same element is connected at different times with different divinities; the names are interchanged, the powers confounded with each other; and thus, owing to the want of individuality, the veneration of the ancient gods grew obsolete; their memory vanished with the phases of society from which they had emerged, or with the momentary gushings of religious sentiment in some peculiar locality. Even Indra, occupying as he did the foremost place among the group of Vaidic gods, and wielding powers, as it would seem, identical with those of the Supreme Being, is, nevertheless, presented in the Rig-Véda as the offspring of Aditi[2], the mother of the universe; the dignities with which he is invested are equally ascribed to Agni, Rudra, and the rest; while, in the next period of Hindu mythology, the same Indra is depressed into a deity of the second order; his heaven (or 'swarga') is only fourth in rank among the bright localities, entitled superhuman, and even his throne itself is rendered insecure. He has to tremble at the prospect of still further humiliation, if, peradventure, some daring mortal shall complete the horse-sacrifice, or qualify himself for ruling in the place of Indra by extraordinary acts of penance. Such are the indefinite forms and such the varying

[1] As early as the Rig-Véda, the Soma sacrifice is called *amrita* (='immortal'); and in a secondary sense the liquor which communicates immortality (*Ibid.* p. 173).

[2] Langlois, II. 238; cf. III. 42, 492.

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aspects of Hindu polytheism at the early stage of its development.

The moral tone of the Védas.

2. But if the Védas thus abound with indications that the worshipper in ancient times was gifted only with a superficial consciousness of one Almighty God, and if the texture of his hymns and prayers were such as to obscure that consciousness still further by interposing an innumerable crowd of fresh divinities, we are prepared to find a corresponding deterioration in his moral and religious sentiments. And such is really the case. The physical attributes of God and of superior genii are confessed and venerated; but the traces of belief in His moral government are only few and indistinct[1]. The worshipper, for instance, moved by some good fortune has prepared his eucharistic offering, the oiled butter or the juices of a sacred plant; he bends in supplication; he invites his favourite god to come and taste of his abundance. Winds and fire and sunlight, these are all profusely welcomed to the banquet; but the God of nature, He who framed the world and reigns supreme above the elements, appears to have been utterly overlooked; He has no part in the oblation, except, perhaps, allusion to Him be intended in that solemn muttering (Ôm), by which the ceremony is preceded. Or, again, the worshipper is overwhelmed by sorrow and perplexity; his hopes are blasted or his fortune wrecked, and with the spirit of a famished menial he determines to apply for aid and compensation to some fresh divinity. His voice, which quivers with emotion, has at length found utter-

[1] See Saint-Hilaire, *Des Védas*, pp. 172, 173, who corroborates this inference.

ance in a passionate prayer; yet what that prayer in almost every case solicits is exemption from the physical ills of life, a fuller and more sparkling cup of temporal prosperity. Large and healthy families, cows and horses, fertile pastures, bounteous harvests, victory over public and domestic foes, are found to be the leading, not to say the solitary topics in the supplications of the Védas. We shall look in vain for penitential psalms, or hymns commemorating the descent of spiritual benefits.

Imperfect consciousness of sin.

This want of moral sensibility, this slowness to admit the presence and malignity of moral evil, and the holiness of Him with whom we have to do, is not by any means peculiar to the creed of Hindustan. If prayers suggested in the Védas differed in some points from those of the adjacent countries, all such differences were only matters of degree. If Persia, for example, soon discovered that the greatest struggles which affect humanity are not the struggles of the sun and clouds, the waters and the winds, but struggles raging in the breast of living men between the elements of light and darkness, and the powers of good and evil, it is notwithstanding an indisputable fact that even in the brighter spots of ancient heathendom the supplications offered to the gods are nearly always prompted by the wish for temporal prosperity[1].

[1] 'They are supplicated to confer temporal blessings upon the worshipper, riches, life, posterity; the short-sighted vanities of human desire, which constituted the sum of heathen prayer in all heathen countries.' Prof. Wilson, *Lectures*, pp. 9, 10, Oxf. 1840. Stuhr, *Die Religions-Systeme der heidnischen Völker des Orients*, Berlin, 1836, 'Einleitung,' p. xii, has pointed out the strong contrast in this particular between the worship of the heathen and the Christian; and indeed of all the extant heathen prayers a very small fraction only are offered in the hope

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Exceptions there would doubtless be, since the conviction of man's moral bondage is inseparable from himself, and cannot be obliterated in the lowest depths of sensuality. Accordingly we may discover here and there examples bearing witness to the glimmerings of such consciousness as far back as the earliest prayers of the Védas. 'O Varuńa, by our invocations, by our sacrifices, by our holocausts, we desire to turn away thine anger. Come, thou giver of life; relieve us, prudent king, from our offences[1].' 'Soma [the personified libation] has declared to me that in the waters are all medicines [*or*, medicinal plants]. Agni works the happiness of all: the waters cure all evils. Salutary waters, guard my body from disease [*or*, perfect all medicines for the good of my body], that I may long behold the sun. Purifying waters, cleanse away from me whatever is impure or criminal, every evil I have done by violence, by imprecations, by injustice[2].' It should also be remembered that the same conviction of impurity might not unfrequently suggest the offering of material sacrifice, to which allusion has been made above. Of human[3] victims no example is preserved in any

of calling down moral or spiritual benefits. An example of the latter may be seen in Creuzer's *Symbolik*, IV. 629, Leipzig, 1842.

[1] *Rig-Véda*, ed. Langlois, I. 41. In a subsequent hymn (*Ibid.* I. 79) there are also allusions to moral turpitude; but the last verse is differently rendered by Saint-Hilaire (*Des Védas*, p. 56). I am very glad to find myself again supported in the view here taken of the Védas by the high authority of Prof. Wilson, who, after mentioning some other peculiarities, remarks: 'There is little demand for moral benefactions, although, in some few instances, hatred of untruth and abhorrence of sin are expressed; a hope is uttered that the latter may be repented of or expiated; and the gods are in one hymn solicited to extricate the worshipper from sin of every kind.' 'Introd.' to his translation of the *Rig-Véda*, I. p. xxvi.

[2] *Rig-Véda*, ed. Langlois, I. 38, and, as repeated, IV. 143.

[3] They can, however, be plainly

of the Védas; nor in that early age did man so frequently evince his consciousness of imperfection by inordinate displays of animal sacrifices[1]. What the Hindu mainly offered was clarified butter poured upon the fire, or else the fermenting juice of the soma-plant[2], which he presented in ladles to the deity whom he invoked. In this, which may at first have been commended to him by its potent and exhilarating properties, he afterwards beheld an emblem of the vital sap whereby the universe itself is made productive; but in bringing such oblation he was actuated chiefly by the hope of gratifying the animal wants of his divinity, not by the idea of deepening his own sense of guilt, or compensating for his own demerit. Still, as we have seen, he was at times oppressed by a misgiving that the gods were hostile to him; that the Rákshasas (or evil spirits) interfered to vitiate his offerings, and that Yama, the sovereign of the dead, was planning his destruction. He grew anxious therefore to disarm their vengeance, and to replace himself if possible upon the moral elevation which he felt that he had forfeited. Iniquity had left its deadly poison in the spirit of the sinner; yet through lack of some unerring guidance he could only dream about the cause of his disorder, and could only guess at the appropriate remedy.

traced as far back as the Aitaréya Bráhmana: see Prof. Wilson's paper in the *Jour. of the Asiat. Soc.* XIII. 105.

[1] There is allusion, however, in the Rig-Véda, as well as in the Yajur-Véda, to the sacrifice of a horse ('aśwamédha'), which afterwards obtained a new importance in the Hindu worship. Still as offered in the Rig-Véda, its object is simply to acquire additional wealth and prosperity, not as in the Puráńas and in Southey's *Curse of Kehama*, to assist in dethroning Indra and exalting the sacrificer to his place: see Wilson's *Rig-Véda*, Vol. II. 'Introd.' pp. xii. sq.

[2] Wuttke, II. 344 sq.

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Early date of the Védas.

3. If we now pass forward from this sketch of early Hindu worship to the questions touching the antiquity of the Védas, it must be conceded that one class of arguments adduced by Indian scholars will hardly stand the test of rigorous criticism. Sir William Jones[1] endeavoured, for example, to fix the precise date of the Yajur-Véda by calculating backwards through the lives of two and forty sages by whom the document is said to have been handed down to us. But the point of departure in this calculation is the age of Parásara, which in its turn depends upon the accuracy of astronomical observations. By the aid of such a process, Jones had placed the composition of the Yajur-Véda as far back as 1580 B.C. Colebrooke, in like manner, having satisfied himself that a Vaidic calendar which he examined ought to be referred to the 14th century B.C., obtained a very similar conclusion. But it seems that this great scholar subsequently staggered under the enormous difficulties of the problem, and was finally disposed to treat his chronological statements as precarious and conjectural[2]. The same opinion must be formed of other calculations resting on the astronomical works of India; nor can vague disclosures of the Kashmir chronicle be entitled to a higher place[3]. Converging as they do, however,

[1] See the *Preface* to his translation of the *Laws of Manu.*

[2] Cf. Saint-Hilaire, *Des Védas,* p. 140. Prof. Wilson, in like manner, *Rig-Véda,* 'Introd.' Vol. I. p. xlviii. observes that in proposing dates on this subject, nothing more than conjecture is intended.

[3] Prichard, who appears to be satisfied with Davis's treatise on the astronomy of the Hindus (*Researches into the Physical History of Mankind,* IV. 102), attaches great importance to the agreement of the results obtained by these different modes of computation. He is, accordingly prepared to place the Great War, which separates the historic from

these various testimonies must be held to have created a presumption in favour of the early dating of the Védas, and such presumption is again supported if we estimate the worth of the internal evidence.

Argument from the character of the language.

(1) The language of the Védas, when compared with later writings of the Indo-A'ryan race, is characterised by a profusion of archaisms. The grammatical forms are less developed, the diction far more rustic, and the style more rugged, primitive and elliptical. To use the illustration of Sir William Jones, the Sanskrit of the Védas differed from the Sanskrit of the classic age, as did the Latin of the age of Numa from the Latin of the age of Cicero. Or in other words, if we might reason from one member of the family of nations to a second, the peculiarities of the Véda-dialect imply an interval as wide as that which parts the English of the venerable Cædmon from the English of the Caroline divines. Those scholars who devote particular attention to the study of the Védas, have moreover noticed great diversities in the language of the several volumes[1], implying that as the hymns which they contain were gradually indited, the language of the A'ryan tribes had passed through several stages of development; while on comparing the 'Mantras,' or Védas proper, with the Bráhmańas, which were intended for their illustration, the existence of fresh intervals between the composition of the text and commentaries is thoroughly ascertained.

the pre-historic period of Indian antiquities, in the 14th century before the Christian era. *Ibid.* p. 104.

[1] Saint-Hilaire, p. 152, who appeals to the authority of Roth, Benfey and Weber.

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Argument from the Vaidic picture of society.

(2) But other proofs, more generally appreciable, and to certain minds more cogent and conclusive, are derived from the peculiar pictures there presented of Hindu society. As the Vaidic hymns were, notwithstanding the extravagant claims advanced in their behalf, composed at various times by different poets, and only strung together in the time of the half-mythical Vyása ('the Arranger'), they reflect the life and feelings of the A'ryan under very different circumstances. At first we see a man of patriarchal simplicity, a hunter or a cowherd. His ideas are circumscribed within the narrow limits of his clan, the chief of which, surrounded by a multitude of cattle, is the father and perhaps the priest of all his followers. In some points these primitive chieftains are not much unlike the petty kings of the Homeric age[1]; but apter parallels are found in Hebrew patriarchs, or in modern Arabs of the desert. According to this version of his life, the A'ryan colonist was originally nomadic in his habits: he was led from plain to plain, or from one lofty plateau to another in quest of milder skies and richer pasturage. At length, indeed, a mighty change comes over his ideas: the shepherd is transformed into a warrior, and we see him on the other side of the great alpine frontier, permanently settled in the north of Hindustan. Yet even there no manifest traces are discerned of a political or religious organisation: we look in vain for cities, temples, images and the like. One section of the colonists appear to be engaged in agriculture: groups of them have been collected and arranged in villages:

[1] Cf. Langlois, *Rig-Véda*, 'Introduction,' p. x.

they are planting, sowing, building; on the one side anxious to propitiate the ungenial powers of nature, on the other actively engaged in warring with the dark-complexioned 'Dasyus,' or, in different words, expelling the old tenants of the soil[1].

But, rude and simple though he be, the A'ryan of the Véda is no savage. He begins to manifest his aptitude for intellectual culture[2]: he is earnest, thoughtful, enterprising: he learns to speak of ships and commerce: he is not entirely ignorant of astronomical science. A worker in the precious metals, and a manufacturer of musical instruments, he has already given proofs of his perception both of the conveniences and the amenities of social life. He has moreover learned in some degree the power, the richness and the flexibility of his native language, and from time to time there rises up a bard, or rishi, whose poetic genius gives expression to the varied feelings that are working in the breast of the community. This rishi is the oracle of his village: in the songs and prayers which he composes lie the elements of common worship, and the germs of that far mightier system, which on its development is destined to unite all Indo-

[1] We catch occasional glimpses of this contest in the hymns of the Védas: *e.g. Rig-Véda Sanhitá*, I. 137, 138, ed. Wilson,—a passage which also proves that the invaders thought themselves the champions of true religion: 'Discriminate,' is the prayer to Indra, 'between the A'ryas and they [? them] that are Dasyus [? unbelievers]: restraining those who perform no religious rites, compel them to submit to the performer of sacrifices.'

[2] Prof. Wilson has drawn attention to some of the points here specified: but he seems to overstate his case when he adds (*Rig-Véda*, Vol. II. p. xvii.) 'These particulars, although they are only briefly and incidentally thrown out, chiefly by way of comparison, or illustration, render it indisputable, that the Hindus of the Vaidik era even had attained to an advanced stage of civilisation, little if at all differing from that in which they were found by the Greeks at Alexander's invasion.'

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A'ryan tribes together, and diffuse its humanising influence to the southernmost point of Hindustan. Such grand ideas, however, were not present to the fancy of the ancient bards: and he who is desirous of realising in some measure the important changes afterwards wrought in Hindu life, has only to transfer his thoughts from the original aspects of society, as pictured in the Védas, to that stage when the ambassador of Seleucus found a welcome at the court of Chandragupta, or when Kálidása, in the century before the Christian era, charmed his audience by the elegant drama of the *Fatal Ring*.

Argument from the theology of the Védas.

(3) There is one more criterion which enables us to judge of the remote antiquity of the Védas. It may be entitled theological. We find it, partly, in the fact that some divinities who stand conspicuous in these books have either undergone most serious transformations, or else have vanished altogether from the literature of the next period[1]:

[1] The following extract from Prof. Wilson's *Introd.*, as above, pp. xxvi, xxvii, is valuable on more accounts than one, and especially as shewing how very inexact some modern writers are in their philosophisings on these subjects: 'The divinities worshipped [in the *Rig-Véda*] are not unknown to later systems, but they there perform very subordinate parts, whilst those deities, who are the great gods—the *Dii majores*—of the subsequent period, are either wholly unnamed in the *Véda*, or are noticed in an inferior and different capacity. The names of Śiva, of Mahádéva, of Durgá, of Kálí, of Ráma, of Krishńa, never occur, as far as we are yet aware: we have a Rudra, who, in after-times, is identified with Śiva, but who, even in the *Puráńas*, is of very doubtful origin and identification; whilst in the Véda he is described as the father of the winds, and is evidently a form of either Agni or Indra. The epithet Kapardin, which is applied to him, appears, indeed, to have some relation to a characteristic attribute of Śiva,—the wearing of his hair in a peculiar braid; but the term has probably in the *Véda* a different signification.... at any rate, no other epithet applicable to Śiva occurs, and there is not the slightest allusion to the form in which, for the last ten centuries at least, he seems to have been almost exclusively wor-

partly, in the absence from the Védas of some doctrines which had afterwards become the cardinal points of the Hindu system. Such, for instance, are the doctrines of caste[1], of transmigration and of incarnation[2]; none of which have hitherto been discovered in the oldest records of Hinduism.

What length of interval was necessary for producing all these changes, social, mental and linguistic, it is now impossible to state with anything like confidence or precision. The development of cognate languages, the culture and expansion of the human intellect, as well as the formation of the framework of society, may all have varied much in different climates and in different periods of man's history.

shipped in India,—that of the *Linga* or *Phallus*. Neither is there the slightest hint of another important feature of later Hinduism, the Trimúrtti, or Tri-une combination of Brahmá, Vishńu and Śiva, as typified by the mystical syllable *Om*, although, according to high authority on the religions of antiquity [*viz.* Creuzer's], the Trimúrtti was the first element in the faith of the Hindus, and the second was the Lingam.'

[1] 'The existence of but one caste in the age of purity, however incompatible with the legend which ascribes the origin of the four tribes to Brahmá, is everywhere admitted.' Wilson, *Vishńu Puráńa*, p. 406. n. 8. Lond. 1840. This admission is strengthened by the fact that other races kindred to the A'ryans were unacquainted with the distinction of caste. It should, however, be remarked that one single hymn in the *Rig-Véda* favours a contrary hypothesis: 'Le Brahman a été sa bouche; le prince (Râjanya) ses bras; le Vêsya, ses cuisses: le Soudra est né de ses pieds' (Langlois, IV. 341). But this hymn is allowed on all hands to be of later date (*Ibid.* pp. 498, 499; Lassen, I. 794). There is also in the *Rig-Véda* (see Langlois, IV. 489, n. 62) an instance of the early use of *dwijas* (*i. e.* 'twice-born'), which is afterwards applied to members of the three superior castes, who as such underwent a special form of initiation; but in that remote period the expression seems to have been used merely for the priests ('les premiers-nés de Rita').

[2] 'Dieses Dogma ist den Vêda fremd, und die wenigen Anspielungen, die in ihnen auf Mythen vorkommen, die später in die Avatâra des Vishnu aufgenommen worden sind, zeigen, dass in der ältesten Zeit die Lehre von der periodischen Menschwerdung des erhaltenden Gottes zur Vertilgung des Uebels noch nicht gebildet worden war:' Lassen, I. 488.

But, what is most essential to our purpose, no eminent critic of the present day will venture to maintain that Hindu civilisation, as represented by its literature, is capable of being carried backwards to a period more remote than that of Joshua and the Exodus,—the age when Hebrew literature began to flourish, and, in contrast to the A'ryan, manifest a thoroughly historic character,—the age, moreover, when the literature, if such it can be called, of other ancient nations can present to the inquirer little more than monstrous legends, or fantastic mythes, or barren lists of dynasties.

§ 2. *Bráhmanism.*

Original seat of Bráhmanism.

It seems that when the A'ryans had secured their conquests in the country of the Five Rivers, and, as some conjecture, offshoots following the course of the Indus had been planted as far south as Cutch and Guzerat, the chief attention of the invaders was directed to the spread of civilisation in the other parts of the Peninsula. The centre of their earliest operations was a narrow strip of territory, watered on one side by the Saraswati, from whence new colonies were propagated year by year, until the plain of the Ganges was entirely rescued from the grasp of the 'barbarian.'

Character of the new theology.

On proceeding to inspect the institutions now completed, we approach another epoch in the history of Hindustan. The twilight of intelligence is passed. The age when elements and processes of nature had by man's poetic faculty been converted, first, into the symbols of religious feeling, and then into the objects of religious worship, is

succeeded[1] by an age entitled 'the heroic age of India,' when the gods are more completely *humanised,* assume a definite shape in the imagination of the worshipper, and exhibit all the ordinary signs of individuality.

Philosophers are not unfrequently disposed to welcome this new species of polytheism, on the ground that it contains a germ of something more exalted and more ethical. They think that the idea of God as one, as personal, as righteous, an idea which in the former period was extruded from the popular belief, was far more likely to be rescued and restored to its supremacy when the inquirer started from the notion of man-like gods, than when he bowed in adoration to a host of shadowy genii or impersonal abstractions. On the other hand, it should be recollected that the Hindu populace would also be more prone to acquiesce in a polytheism of its own creation, and lose sight of spiritual facts which had their symbols in the primitive mythology. In the worship of the elements, the veil between the seen and unseen had remained comparatively slender; in the worship of anthropomorphic gods in whom all human excellencies found their utmost limit, the new object was more satisfying because it was more human, but on that

[1] The divinities of the Vaidic period, who most resemble the heroes of the next age, are the two demigods Aswins, *Áświnau* (dual), children of the sun, endowed with youth and beauty, travelling in a three-wheeled and triangular car, physicians of the gods and benefactors of the human race. Their name is derived from *áśwa* (equus), since they are said to have been begotten by the sun during his metamorphosis as a horse; but as their mother is once called the sea (Sindhu), many writers identify them simply with the sun and moon, which appear to rise out of the ocean: cf. Prof. Wilson, *Introd.* to *Rig-Veda,* Vol. I. p. xxxvi. and Vol. II. p. 179.

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account was far less calculated to suggest a higher class of truths.

Occasional marks of progress.

We must allow, indeed, that intellectually the A'ryans gained a more exalted point of civilisation in the second period of their history. The field of knowledge had been everywhere enlarged: the power of abstract thinking and the tendency to metaphysical speculation, scarcely traceable in the Védas, were now rapidly developed in all quarters: the refinement of men's taste had shewn itself, if not in graceful and voluptuous works of art, at least in the unrivalled majesty and music of their language as employed in the heroic poems. It is also true that in proportion as they grew familiar with antagonisms in nature, they betrayed a somewhat deeper consciousness of discord in themselves; and that with keener sense of moral turpitude, there came the habit of self-loathing and the aspiration after some deliverance from the fetters of the flesh. Such yearnings might be often silenced by the thought that purity, attractive though it be, is for the present unattainable, that the character of gods themselves is full of grievous stains and blemishes, that the obligation to a holy life is seldom if ever urged in the most sacred institutions of their forefathers; yet notwithstanding every drawback and abatement, the existence of a higher tone of moral sensibility appears unquestionable; and therefore we may gladly acquiesce in Ritter's verdict, that 'the retrogression in the second period of Indian religion was not unattended with an element of progress[1].'

[1] *Hist. of Ancient Philosophy*, I. 94.

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Organisation of the Bráhmanical system.

Special features of this new system will be more fully noticed when we come to trace the parallelisms which they exhibit to the facts and verities of Christianity. At present suffice it to enumerate a few of the more prominent characteristics. The Divine has been distinctly apprehended under the form of the human; and thus the pantheon is inhabited by beings of godlike grace or power or dignity, conspicuous alike in counsel and in action, and especially enlisted in diffusing the A'ryan faith among the old possessors of the soil. The system also of which these are the most popular divinities is made to undergo extensive modifications. It has now a far more definite creed, a cumbrous and elaborate ritual, a code of laws, a dominant order of religious teachers. The Védas, we have noticed, bear no marks of a distinction such as that which forms the basis of the Hindu castes; indeed the royal and the sacerdotal offices are there at times united in one eminent person; but in all the commentaries on the Védas, and still more throughout the Laws of Manu[1], the social system of the Indo-A'ryans is completely organised. The whole population, as we there see them, are distributed into four hereditary classes. One of these embraces, it would seem, the conquered natives[2], whose position

[1] These were edited and translated under the title *Mánava Dharma-Śástra* by Sir G. C. Haughton, who based his labours on the older version of Sir W. Jones. Scholars are, however, still divided as to the antiquity of this compilation: cf. Ritter, I. 72 sq. with Elphinstone, *Hist. of India*, pp. 226 sq. 3rd ed. Of course many of the materials were far more ancient: but the most probable date of the appearance of the code in its present form is about the fifth century B.C. (later than the rise of Buddhism, and earlier than the great epic poems).

[2] Lassen, I. 799. So impure and abject were the members of this fourth class, that Bráhmans might not read the Védas, even to them-

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is accordingly most abject. The remainder, who form the A'ryan part of the community, are (1) Bráhmańs, or religious teachers, (2) Kshatriyas, or knights, and (3) Vaiśyas, or tradesmen. But in social rank the Bráhman always rises very high above his fellows. He is the depository of Divine wisdom and authority. A belief in his exalted origin[1] secures him the profoundest reverence even of the royal family. His duties are indeed so rigorously defined, his life is so divided between study, labour, and austerities, that he is precluded from intermeddling in affairs of state or from otherwise exceeding the bounds of his position: yet in all that appertains to knowledge, secular or sacred, he is absolute and unimpeachable.

The 'twice-born.'

The steps by which the Bráhman gained this vast ascendancy are matters only of conjecture. Traces may be found of some mighty conflict between him and the Kshatriya, between the champion of intelligence and the champion of physical prowess; and even after the Bráhman was victorious, the distinction he had won was far less absolute than that which separated all the three superior classes from the wretched śúdras they had crushed. Each individual of those three classes was *dwija*, 'twice-born:' on arriving at maturity, they all received a special tonsure, and were all invested with a thread that symbolised their elevation far above the multitude, that gave them access

selves, in the presence of a śúdra; while to teach him the law, or instruct him in the mode of expiating sin, was sure to sink a Bráhman into the hell called Asamvrita (Elphinstone, pp. 16, 17). Yet the chańdála, or offspring of intercourse which violated the law of caste, was held to be even more contemptible. He was classed with 'dogs and crows.'

[1] See above, p. 25, n. 1.

to the Védas, and, it may be, intimated a belief that souls of a superior order had in recompense of previous merits been permitted to spend another life in tenements so honourable[1].

New phase of Pantheism.

But the Hindu doctrine of caste is intimately connected with other central verities of their religion. The Bráhman occupied the highest place in the gradations of society, because he was believed to stand in the most intimate relation to the Supreme Being, because the Spirit of the Universe had been most clearly imaged forth in him. For during all this second period of Hinduism we shall find the various species of existence ultimately traced to unity, on the ground that each is a constituent part of God, and that its special character depends upon its distance, or the measure of its aberration, from the primal source of being. In the creed of Bráhmanism, as methodised by 'orthodox' philosophy, God alone is truly said to be: all other forms of life are, as to their material properties, but empty and illusive; while, as to their spiritual properties, they are but transient scintillations of His glory. Alone, supreme, and unapproachable, a feeling of dissatisfaction with Himself had crossed the mind of the Great Solitary. He longed for offspring, and at length determined to resolve the primitive simplicity of His essence, and transform Himself into a world which might contrast with His eternal quietude. From this desire of God has sprung whatever is, or is to be: the earth, the sky, the rock, the flower, the forest, the innumerable tribes of gods and men, of beasts and demons,—these, so far as they possess a true existence, are

[1] Cf. Fred. von Schlegel, *Phil. of Hist.* pp. 156, 157; Wuttke, II. 318.

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all consubstantial with divinity. The basis underlying all the forms which they assume is the Ineffable, the Uncreated. God may be regarded as the undeveloped world, the world as the development of God. He is both the fountain and the stream, the cause and the effect, the one Creator and the one creation. 'As the spider spins and gathers back [its thread]; as plants sprout on the earth; as hairs grow on a living person; so is this universe, here, produced from the imperishable nature. By contemplation the vast one germinates; from him food [*or*, body] is produced; and thence, successively, breath, mind, real [elements], worlds and immortality arising from [good] deeds[1].' Expressions of this kind had not unnaturally suggested to some minds the inference that the pantheism of ancient India was simple and materialistic: but a further insight into the philosophy, at least so far as it appears in monuments of the Bráhmanic age[2], will prove such inferences to be erroneous. We may not, indeed, be able to decide with confidence respecting the complexion of the earliest Hindu metaphysics, since the Védas, notwithstanding the ingenuity of their commentators[3], will be found to have contained a very slender metaphysical ele-

[1] An extract given by Colebrooke (*Asiat. Researches*, VIII. 475) from a upanishad of the fourth Véda.

[2] A specimen is subjoined from the first chapter of the *Laws of Manu* (Jones' *Works*, III. 66, 4to. ed.): 'He, whom the mind alone can perceive, whose essence eludes the external organs, who has no visible parts, who exists from eternity, even *He*, the soul of all beings, whom no being can comprehend, shone forth in person. He, having willed to produce various beings *from His own divine substance*, first with a thought created the waters, and placed in them a productive seed,' &c.

[3] For instance, they have tried to evolve the principal dogmas of the Védánta philosophy, on the unity and universality of spirit, from a long hymn of the *Rig-Véda*, II. 125 sq., ed. Wilson.

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ment: but as soon as ever an attempt was made to bring the ruder superstitions of their forefathers into harmony with more refined conceptions of the Godhead, the whole tone of Hindu pantheism is subtilized, to the extent of questioning the reality of the material world itself. All forms assumed by matter are then held to be not only transient but illusive. The semblance of reality which they possess is due to Máyá[1],—the personification of God's fruitless longing for some being other than His own,—the power, by which, in different words, the Absolute had been Himself beguiled from His original quietude. But while matter is thus held to be essentially non-existent, that which underlies and animates the whole of the phenomenal universe is one with the Divinity, who, by a species of self-analysis, has brought Himself under the conditions of the finite and the temporal, and must in future so continue till the visible is ultimately reabsorbed by the invisible, and multiplicity reduced afresh to simple unity.

'Máyá.'

[1] On this peculiar feature of Bráhmanism, see Wuttke, II. 282 sq., who shews that in the Vaidic period, *máyá* meant no more than the desire of evolution. However, the idea of *máyá*, as fully developed, always implies 'illusion,' 'unreality:' it means that God, who in himself had no attributes, was beguiled into a belief that He possessed them by his union with *máyá*, or his own longing; and so appeared to create, preserve and destroy. The following illustration from the *Probodha-Chandrodaya*, as translated by Goldstücker (Ibid. p. 284) will throw further light upon this subject: 'Maja [*i. e.* Máyá] ist unbegreiflich. Gleich einer unzüchtigen Dirne lässt sie den höchsten Geist Dinge sehen, die gar nicht existiren, und täuscht ihn so. Der Göttliche, dessen Glanz dem Krystalle gleicht, der niemals sich verändert, ward durch sie, die Unehrbare, in heftige Unruhe versetzt. Er, der Wissende, hing unklaren Phantasien nach, und da er in den von der Maja bereiteten Schlummer fiel, erblickte er betäubt vielgestaltige Träume: ich bin, diess ist mein Vater, diess meine Mutter, diess mein Feld, mein Reichthum *u. s. w.* ... Wie ein See in den Truggebilden der Mittagssonne erscheint, so entfaltete sich das fleckenlose Licht aus unrichtiger Erkenntniss als Äther, Luft, Feuer, Wasser, Erde.'

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It must not, however, be supposed that this idea of one original and all-pervading spirit (Mahán-A'tmá) was irreconcileable with the old polytheism. On the contrary, the pantheon of the Indo-A'ryans was enlarged instead of narrowed in the progress of this second period, till, as seen in the Puránas, it has reached a most appalling magnitude. I shall hereafter have occasion to refer specifically to the sacred triad of the Bráhmans, and shall therefore only touch upon it here, as one example of a law by which the mind of the Hindu was constantly disposed to view all forms of being under triune aspects[1]. Addicted from the first to the examination of natural phenomena, he could not fail to witness year by year the rise, the growth, the death (in order to the reproduction) of vegetable matter. The concentration of his thoughts on such a process had induced the habit of generalising his conceptions, and finally of picturing all the changes of the universe as an effect of generating,

The Hindú triad.

[1] Wuttke, with a truly Germanic passion for symmetrical arrangement, and well-rounded theories, has represented this tendency in a genealogical form:

Das sich entfaltende Brahma

	Entstehen	Bestehen	Vergehen
	Geburt	Leben	Tod
	Satva	Radschas	Tamas
	Licht	Luft	Feuer
	Himmel	Oberwelt	Unterwelt
	Indra	Varuna	Agni
	Brahmâ	Vischnu	Çiva
	Götter	Menschen	Thiere
	Geist	Seele	Körper
(Seele:)	Selbstheit	Gemüth	Verstand
(Körper:)	Kopf	Brust	Bauch
	Brahmanen	Xatrija	Vaiçja

preserving, and dissolving forces. It was by this process also that the properties of creation, of preservation, of destruction (as the medium of regeneration) were personified and worshipped as Brahmá, Vishńu, and Śiva. The absolute and self-existent, the impersonal That, by which the universe was first projected into being, whose creative energies still operate in never-ending cycles, had been thus presented to the Hindu mind as 'three only[1]:' while some elevated spirits, searching after the one supreme God, 'if haply they might find Him,' laboured to identify the object of their search with the first member of the sacred triad. As he was called Brahmá (masculine), they named it Brahma (neuter). But results which we have noticed in the Vaidic age were no less visible in this. The lofty product of man's generalising faculty was too ethereal and transcendant for the cognizance of ordinary spirits. So remote was Brahma from the sphere of sinful finite beings, so unloving and impersonal his character, that no temple was erected and no victim offered in his honour: and even his more concrete image, the personified Brahmá, has never, in historic times, conciliated to himself a share of popular veneration[2].

Brahmá and Brahma.

No apter illustration can be furnished of the shifting and capricious genius of Hindu mythology, than the fact that of those three divinities who

[1] See *Asiatic Researches*, VIII. 395—397, where Colebrooke quotes a remarkable passage from the *Nirukta*, affirming that the gods are 'only three' in number. It will be noticed more at length in Chap. II.

[2] See Stuhr, *Religions-systeme des Orients*, I. 97, 98. He is still worshipped by one class, the Bráhmans, at sunrise every morning: but (as Mr Elphinstone remarks) he 'was never much worshipped, and has now but one temple in India' (p. 89, 3rd ed.).

rank foremost in the system of the Bráhmans, Śiva had been previously unhonoured and unknown. The other two had, in like manner, held subordinate positions, Vishńu figuring in the Védas as an elemental god like Varuńa, and Brahmá, if there identical with Brahmań[1], being merely an equivalent for Agni. And in strict accordance with these facts, the highest tenants of the Hindu pantheon are still viewed as finite beings, liable, when certain revolutions are completed, to dethronement and extinction. They partake of the phenomenal character of the universe; and therefore the eventual winding up of all things will necessitate their reabsorption.

It is thus apparent that the fundamental dogma of the Bráhmans is the dogma of *emanation*. The Divinity is believed to be resolved, diffused, discerpted, and so weakened. All things are imperfect, because all are in a state of flux and reflux; their intrinsic character depending on their ever-varying distance from the centre of unity, or on the number of the intermediate links by which they are removed from the original essence.

Hindu theory of man;

And the same idea will help us more than any other to elucidate the Hindu theory of man. The 'orthodox' philosopher uniformly started, in his speculations on this subject, from the Divine side of things, because with him spirit is all-important, and the human spirit consubstantial with the Spirit of the universe. But owing to a happy inconsistency, which reappears in many later speculations, Hindu pantheism could not altogether blast those

[1] See Langlois, *Rig-Véda*, IV. 386: where we find a hymn on the marriage of Brahman and Júhú. In many other passages of the *Rig-Véda* Brahmanaspati=Agni, where Brahman appears to mean 'priest.'

instincts of the soul which lead man to assert his individuality and the inherent freedom of his choice. A few who called themselves philosophers yielded, it is true, to logical pressure, and adopted the degrading error of the fatalist; they argued that the foulest crimes of man are ultimately wrought by Brahma, and therefore that the guilt is not attributable to the human instrument[1]: but even his own distorted version of the Fall will testify that the Hindu was dimly conscious all the while of his original freedom and nobility. According to that tradition[2], God, when He determined to project the universe, gave birth at once to all particular souls. At first, they were both free and happy, but, impelled by envy and ambition, they eventually broke away still further from the primal essence, and so forfeited their eminent place among celestial intelligences. A world, or rather purgatory, was then constructed for their habitation: it came forth already blighted and disorganised; and out of it was made the human body of the same debased material, in order to supply more deadly instruments of torture, and more dismal cells for the incarceration of the damned[3]. The Here and visible had thus become in Bráhmanism the dark antithesis of the Hereafter and invisible; and we learn, accordingly, how from the doctrine of *emanation* had sprung up a second characteristic principle of this creed,—the doctrine of *dualism*. So lost,

and of the world.

[1] The Christian missionary of the present day is not unfrequently repulsed, when speaking of righteousness and judgment to come, by such assertions as the following: 'I have neither sin nor guilt, for every thing is wrought in me by Brahma:' cf. Wuttke, II. 332.

[2] See more on this subject in Chap. III.

[3] See the picture of a human body in Manu, ch. VI. §§ 77, 78.

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Doctrine of transmigration.

however, is the human spirit, so oppressed by the ungenial atmosphere around it, and so weakened by the sinful burdens of the flesh, that though in every case believed to be recoverable, many a life of pain and penance will be ordinarily needed for promoting its exaltation and securing its return. It may at first, for instance, be united with the lowest species of organic life; and, under favourable circumstances, may ascend in its successive births 'into the bodies of spiders, of snakes, of chameleons' and the like, until deemed worthy of inhabiting a human tenement. The trial then begins which will determine all its future destiny. An opportunity has been given it of achieving its own liberation; and according to the present quality of its actions it will mount directly upwards through the ranks of demi-gods and gods, or plunge again into the lower region of existence, and commence a fresh series of births. It may be that this vast idea of transmigration was suggested partly by man's growing consciousness of his demerit, partly by his inability to account for the existing distribution of rewards and punishments, partly by observing points of contact and resemblance between faculties and instincts of the lower animals and those of human beings. But, however prompted, the idea of transmigration became at length so deeply rooted in the creed of Hindustan, that even the most rampant forms of infidelity were unable to dislodge it. The first aim of the Bráhmanical system, as interpreted alike by peasant and philosopher, was to shorten the duration of such wanderings, or diminish the amount of purgatorial suffering: and the highest glory of that system, in the eyes of

all its votaries, was to furnish rules or grant indulgences, by which they might attain immediate and complete exemption from such terrible necessity[1].

What, then, are the methods which the Bráhman has prescribed for the attainment of supreme felicity, or reabsorption into God? These methods are reducible to two. The first, adapted to the character and capacities of the many, consisted chiefly, not to say exclusively, of outward and mechanical acts of worship. Moral merit[2] was by them confounded with ritual punctuality. The repetition of the sacred texts which they had gathered from the teaching of the Bráhmans, though the śúdra-class was rigorously denied this scanty privilege; the invocation of a host of deities; the deprecation of evil spirits; dutiful obedience to the priestly order, and merciful regard for every class of sentient creatures[3],—these were deemed the fittest passport, not indeed to absolute repose, but to a loftier and more hopeful stage of being on the dissolution of the present body.

Character of the popular religion.

[1] 'This belief [in a metempsychosis] is not to be looked upon as a mere popular superstition; it is the main principle of all Hindu metaphysics: it is the foundation of all Hindu philosophy. The great object of their philosophical research in every system, Brahmanical or Buddhist, is the discovery of the means of putting a stop to further transmigration; the discontinuance of corporeal being; the liberation of soul from body.' Wilson, *Pref.* to the *Sánkhya Káriká*, p. x. Oxf. 1837.

[2] For instance, it is declared in the *Laws of Manu* (ch. II. § 79: Jones' *Works*, III. 94): 'A twice-born man [*i. e.* a member of any of the three superior castes], who shall a thousand times repeat those three (or Ôm, the vyáhritis, and the gáyatrí) apart [from the multitude] shall be released in a month even from a great offence, as a snake from his slough.' Again (§ 82): 'Whosoever shall repeat day by day, for three days, without negligence, that sacred text, shall [hereafter] approach the Divine essence, move freely as air, and assume an ethereal form:' cf. also the consentient testimony of the late Col. Sleeman, a very acute observer of the peculiarities of the Hindu mind, in his *Rambles and Recollections*, II. 18, 19.

[3] See *Manu*, ch. XII. § 83.

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Character of the philosophical religion.

It was very different with the second and far smaller class, the early mystics and philosophers of Hindustan. By these the doctrine of God's abstract unity was more completely realised, and therefore when they countenanced the worship of the *dévas,* it was only as the old Socinian worshipped Christ, or as the Roman-catholic of the present age professes to adore the saints[1]. They even shrank from the idea of giving attributes to God, and so reducing Him within the sphere of human sympathies, but laboured, on the other hand, to raise humanity at once into complete equality with the Divine. Their favourite motto was, 'He who knows the Supreme God becomes God.' On the wings of knowledge, therefore, these philosophers hoped to rise indefinitely until they lost themselves in that which is alone true being,—the abysses of the Absolute and Universal. They did not, it may be, reject the ceremonial worship of their forefathers ; they did not feel exonerated from the duty of restraining their sensual appetites, but rather would insist upon the need of violent austerities in order to escape more easily from every fascination of the natural life : yet, on the other hand, the pinnacles on which they stood were so exalted and so inaccessible to the many, that a total separation was now forming between them and other classes of their fellow countrymen, between the follower of the Hindu Gnosis and the herd of vulgar and unlettered souls : and, as the tradesman could never gain the social eminence of the soldier, nor the soldier of the Bráhman, none but members of the

[1] See the language of a Portuguese missionary in Von Bohlen, *Das alte Indien,* I. 153.

learned class were they to whom immediate liberation was made possible. The rest had, speaking generally, been doomed to wander on for ages, and to undergo an almost endless series of new births.

Probable age of Bráhmanism.

The object of these pages does not make it necessary for me to adjudicate respecting the antiquity of the religious system, which had manifestly reached its prime on the appearance of the Institutes of Manu. Nearly all competent scholars are inclined to place it far higher than the date of Alexander's expedition[1], arguing partly from allusions interspersed in Greek writers of the period, and still more from evidence surviving in the two great epic poems of Hindustan, the Rámáyańa and Mahábhárata, which not only testify to the continuous struggle of that system, in the south of India, with the older form of heathenism, with 'monsters, giants and barbarous men,' but also indicate the vast predominance obtained by the Bráhmanical order. Yet, however this question may be finally decided, little doubt exists that long before the inroads of the Macedonian hero, adversaries of the 'orthodox' belief were silently arising and acquiring strength beneath its very shadow.

[1] Almost the only writer of intelligence who now advocates the contrary is Col. Sykes: see *Asiat. Journal,* Vol. VI. He there affirms, 'After a careful collation of facts, I unhesitatingly declare, that I have not met with evidence to satisfy my mind that Brahmanism *was ever in the ascendant,* until after the fall of Buddhism' (p. 448). He believes that Buddhism was the old religion of the A'ryans, and that Bráhmanism first became the popular creed, when Sankhara A'chárya established the exclusive worship of Śiva in the 9th century after Christ. In like manner Col. Sykes is of opinion that the Pali is an older language than the Sanskrit, and especially presses the point that, although we have many old inscriptions and coins of Buddhist kings (in Pali), we have none whatever of Bráhmanical kings until the fourth, nay probably until the seventh century after Christ.

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As the primitive religion of the Védas was transformed from year to year, until, in spite of their ingenious commentators, we are able to detect few traces of its earlier characteristics, so the creed of Bráhmanism itself was finally assaulted by the learned artifices of the sceptic, and transmuted in the crucible of the philosopher.

§ 3. *Schools of Philosophy*[1].

Rise of philosophic schools.

While the influence of the sacerdotal order was rapidly increasing, while the Vaidic doctrines were recast in more ideal moulds, and while the popular mind of India, vigorous and creative as before, was on the one side adding to the number of its mythes, and on the other forming new religious confraternities exclusively devoted to the worship either of Śiva or Vishńu, the thinking class of the community was more and more estranged from the religion of their fathers. They began to pry into such questions as the following: 'What is the original element, or power of nature, lying at the base of all phenomena? What is man, and whence? Whither is he tending? Which of

[1] The two schools entitled to the name of 'orthodox,' are (1) the *Púrva* (earlier) *Mímánsá*, founded by Jaimini, with the design of facilitating the interpretation of the Védas, and (2) the *Uttara* (later) *Mímánsá*, or *Védánta*, attributed to the half-mythical sage Vyása, or by others more correctly to Vyása, named Krishńa Dwaipáyana. The name Védánta (anta = 'end') sufficiently denotes the spirit which pervaded the latter system: although the basis of that system must be sought not so much in the Védas proper, as in the Upanishads. See Colebrooke's *Essays on the Philosophy of the Hindus*, as edited, with additions, by Pauthier, Paris, 1833; and the very useful edition of the *Aphorisms* of various schools, printed for the Benares Government College, under the care of Dr Ballantyne. For a copy of the latter series I am indebted to the courtesy of John Muir, Esq., a true friend of India.

all things is the most important? What is truth? And what must be my aim in order that I may have done what is fitting to be done?' These questions might be turned aside or deemed unanswerable by many to whom they were presented; but others, reeling under the burden they imposed, would not unfrequently retire for comfort to the neighbouring forest, and as followers gathered round them, each might finally become the centre of a literary circle, if not the founder of a school. At first, however, the contemplative philosopher might be unconscious, or but slightly conscious, of his opposition to the 'sacred' writings. He might even, like the earliest race of Christian schoolmen, be desirous of employing philosophic methods only to establish popular belief on a more rational and lasting basis. To his efforts, therefore, we may be indebted for the systematic moulding of Hinduism, which appears in the post-Vaidic writings; since every school of 'orthodox' philosophy manifests the deepest veneration both for lyric and dogmatic portions of the Védas. These are deemed the utterances of God himself; and, as partaking of His essence, they are absolute, infallible, eternal[1].

Orthodox philosophy.

Yet other thoughtful spirits, who have frequent representatives in later times and distant countries[2], grew more daring in their philosophical speculations. They were more disposed to start afresh in

Heterodox philosophy.

[1] For example, it is stoutly contended by the school of Mímánsá (*Aphorisms*, Part 1. pp. 32 sq. ed. Ballantyne) that the Védas are retrospectively eternal, notwithstanding the occurrence in them of names of men, &c.

[2] Cousin, while engaged in lecturing on the philosophy of the last century, found himself carried back to India as the birth-place of systems which are often thought to be of modern extraction: 'En effet,' he writes, 'la philosophie indienne est

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their pursuit of knowledge, to devise a theory of religion for themselves, and gather the materials mainly, if not solely, from their observation of the world around them. It was rather in the open book of nature than in the traditionary hymns and legends that they hoped to find a satisfactory solution of their multiplying doubts.

This bolder race of Hindu speculators we shall most conveniently study in three classes, (*a*) the 'atheistic' Sánkhya, (*b*) Buddhism, (*c*) the eclectic, or intermediate school, as represented in the Bhagavad-Gítá.

a. Sánkhya Philosophy.

The Sánkhya school.

The author of the Sánkhya philosophy was Kapila, who, like the great majority of educated Hindus, was probably a Bráhman; though his later followers hold that he obtained his knowledge of the twenty-five categories, which formed the basis of his teaching, 'merely by birth;' in other words, that he was himself an incarnation of the Deity[1]. The system which he founded was entitled Sánkhya[2], apparently because the author deemed it a result of pure reason, or deliberate judgment. It professed to remedy the various ills of life, external and internal, by resolving intellectual

tellement vaste, que tous les systèmes de philosophie s'y rencontrent, qu'elle forme tout un monde philosophique, et qu'on peut dire à la lettre que l'histoire de la philosophie de l'Inde est un abrégé de l'histoire entière de la philosophie.' *Cours de l'Hist. de Philosophie*, I. 180, Paris, 1829.

[1] See Dr. Ballantyne's *Lecture on the Sánkhya Philosophy*, embracing the text of the *Tattwa-Samása*, Mirzapore, 1850.

[2] Sánkhya from sankhyá = 'number,' and also 'reason.' Hence 'the rational system.' Others find in the name a reference to something like the Pythagorean theory of numbers. It is worth observing that the modern Buddhists of Ceylon frequently call their teachers 'the clergy of reason:' Tennent, *Christianity in Ceylon*, p. 192.

difficulties, and by revealing to its votary 'the real nature of all that is.' It does not, like some other systems, spend its strength in trying to discriminate between existence and non-existence; it puts the further question, What *made* things as they are? and thus, excepting soul, which is a mute, inert, and passionless spectator of the process, every thing is by the Sánkhya represented under the two aspects of 'producer' and 'production[1].'

Its materialism.

In this creed, the plastic origin of all material things, the primary productive essence[2] (*prakriti*), whose properties come before us in sensation, is the 'undiscrete,' the indestructible, the all-embracing, or, in modern phraseology, the Absolute. 'Creation' is the individualising of this universal principle: yet the motive power is due in no case to a conscious and designing Agent, but rather to blind impulses, evolving first intelligence, or *buddhi*, one of the inherent properties of the material essence, and then self-consciousness, the third in order of the Sánkhya principles[3]. The consciousness of individual existence (*ahan-kára*) is thus, according to the present system, an attribute of matter[4]: its organ is material: it can only be connected with the soul by self-illusion: it is no proper and original element of man; and in the school of Kapila, the aim is so to educate the young philosopher, that he is prepared to lay aside the pronoun *I* entirely, to affirm that souls have individually no interest either in human passions

[1] *Lecture*, as above, p. 53.

[2] On its affinity with the ὕλη of Plato and Aristotle, see M. Pauthier's note on Colebrooke, *Essais*, p. 17.

[3] *Lecture*, as above, pp. 26, 54.

[4] See *Sánkhya Káriká*, ed. Wilson, pp. 175, 176, where it is distinctly affirmed that soul or spirit can have no attributes, and is entirely passive.

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or possessions, and in this sense to declare, as the grand climax of his teaching, 'Neither I am, nor is aught mine, nor is there any I[1].'

Another feature of the system is that, without impugning the reality of spirit, or refusing to it some directive agency, the active principle in man is always held to be a property of body, and action itself regarded as material. Kapila did not wish, as it would seem, to enter on elaborate discussions touching the origin and destination of man's spiritual nature. Philosophy, he concluded, ought to deal chiefly with phenomena, not with final causes, and excepting hints to the effect that *buddhi*, or intelligence, though itself material, is the link between the soul and matter, we shall look in vain for any definite theory as to the connexion and disconnexion of the visible and the invisible. The Sánkhya speculator had before him two distinct classes of effects, a world produced by nature, and a multitude of souls proceeding from a spiritual essence. The first attracted his chief interest. He did not, however, fail to recognise the fact that souls are in the ordinary state of man possessed, or, he would say, deluded by the consciousness of individuality, and that this consciousness will haunt them till, so far as they are interested, all the processes of nature have completed their development. He also held that such activity of nature has no other object than the liberation of the soul: it is an instance of unselfishness: the process will go on with reference to that liberation, till it is no longer needed, —'as a man boiling rice for a meal desists when it

[1] Colebrooke, p. 44. The original is remarkable: Násmi na mé náham.

is dressed[1].' 'Generous nature, endued with qualities, does by manifold means accomplish without benefit [to herself] the wish of ungrateful soul, devoid of qualities[2]:'—expressions, which, if I mistake not, were among the earliest evidences that philosophic minds were rising to the great conception of self-sacrifice, or rather of spontaneous action in behalf of others.

Is the Sánkhya system atheistic?

How far the Sánkhya system is obnoxious to the charge of atheism, has been frequently disputed[3]. Kapila himself affected to discern, in his peculiar theory of nature, the solution of all human problems, and consequently was disposed to treat assertions of a primal and intelligent Cause, distinct from matter and surpassing nature, as extremely doubtful, or, at least, as philosophically superfluous. Hence opponents[4], in whose eyes religion and philosophy were convertible terms, assailed him chiefly on this ground, asseverated that his teaching was 'unscriptural' and absurd, repudiated his attempts to shelter himself beneath a figurative interpretation of the Védas, and branded all his speculations with the title 'atheistic' (*niríśwara, i.e.* 'without an *íśwara*,' or 'lord'). But his disciples might have urged in mitigation of this charge that Kapila does not entirely overlook the presence of spirit in the

[1] *Sánkhya Káriká*, ed. Wilson, p. 168.

[2] *Ibid.* p. 171.

[3] Cousin, who treats the Sánkhya philosophy as the sensualism [sensationalism] of India, declares that it must always issue in 'materialism, fatalism, atheism' (*Cours* &c. I. 200).

[4] See the *Aphorisms of the Vedánta Philosophy*, Bk. I. ch. I. sect. II. (ed. Ballantyne), containing a 'confutation of the Atheistic doctrines of the Sánkhyas.' One argument is well put, *viz.* that man, who by the philosopher is called upon to identify himself with the course of the world, cannot without absurdity be called upon to identify himself with what is unintelligent.

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midst of the material universe,—inert, indeed, and passionless, 'a bystander, a spectator[1],' but still a real entity,—and further, that he is not unwilling to assign the origin of individual souls to some great central essence, gifted with volition, and as such, analogous to the abstract God of the Védántins. The truth appears to be that Kapila, in recoiling from their system, rushed at once into the opposite extreme. They laboured to get rid of contradictions between visible and invisible by questioning, and finally denying, the reality of the former. He, perplexed as much as they by the anomalies and apparent dualism of the world, allotted the first place to matter, or at least invested it with all active properties. What was Máyá, or illusion, in the 'orthodox' creed, became reality in his: it was the true foundation of the visible universe.

Practical aim of Kapila and his followers.

The Sánkhya was, however, thoroughly Indian in the practical bent of his philosophy. He was striving, like the rest, to purchase an exemption from the fatal liability to repetition of birth; he hoped to further the emancipation of the spirit from the bonds of individuality. And knowledge was the single recipe which he would deign to offer in promoting these desirable results. He laid no stress whatever on the influences of moral goodness; while sacrifice and every form of ritual observance, though the merit of them was in general terms conceded, could possess no charm for

[1] Colebrooke, ed. Pauthier, pp. 40, 180. In reply to the question, What is soul? it is answered (*Lecture*, as above, p. 17): 'Soul is without beginning, subtile, omnipresent, intelligent, without [the three] qualities, eternal, spectator, enjoyer, not an agent, the knower of body, pure, not producing aught.'

him, because they only served to place the worshipper upon a level with the perishable *dêvas*, and secured no more than temporary liberation[1]. Such grovelling aims can never satisfy the aspirations of the true philosopher. He, therefore, hastens to strike out a new and independent pathway, free, as he maintains, from every shadow of 'impurity, excess, or deficiency[2].'

Means of liberation.

If we ask, What is the special character of the remedy to which these wondrous powers may be attributed?—the answer is that it consists of a profound acquaintance with the Sánkhya philosophy, as digested in twenty-five categories; or, in other words, implies a perfect knowledge of the way in which mankind are constituted, and the means by which they can escape from the entanglements of self. No sooner have these principles been mastered than the Sánkhya is elevated, potentially at least, to the ultimate stages of existence. Pain and pleasure, vice and virtue cease to operate for him. He is no more susceptible of qualities so accidental and so earthly. It is true that owing to the force of impulses already given, he must continue for a while to occupy a human body, and must act like other mortals, 'as the potter having set his wheel whirling puts on it a lump of clay, fabricates a vessel and takes it off, and leaves the wheel continuing to turn round[3]; yet all the

[1] *Aphorisms of the Sánkhya Philosophy*, Bk. I. Aph. 83: *Sánkhya Káriká*, ed. Wilson, p. 15. In the aphorism, it is maintained, that all liberation, supposed to be wrought out by ritual observances, will be found imperfect and temporary, just because it was the result of *act*, or was accomplished by *means*.

[2] *Sánkhya Káriká*, p. 14. It is curious to observe that the 'impurity' of the Vaidic method arose partly from the countenance there given to *animal* sacrifices.

[3] *Ibid.* pp. 184, 185.

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consequences of action are prevented when the soul is once illuminated by true knowledge. Or if it be asked again, By what peculiar channels man obtains this salutary illumination?—the answer is, By inference, by perception, and, last in order, by tradition or "right affirmation[1]."' For Kapila was driven to confess not only that some truths may far exceed the range of human vision and the powers of human logic, but that, on their revelation, such high verities are capable of being handed down to future ages. He himself had, for example, been indebted to the ancients for more than one ingredient of the system he had founded.

Kapila's theory of man.

With regard to the capacities of the human subject, Kapila pursued a very independent line. He went so far as to suggest ideas fatal to the vast prerogatives of the Bráhmans. Human souls, he argued, though personally distinct[2], are all of equal worth and elevation. Present inequalities in their condition he referred to the specific structure of men's bodies, or rather to the distribution of the primary elements from which their bodies are compounded. These elements[3] together form a triad.

[1] *Lecture*, as above, p. 49. Some of the matters not proveable by perception or by inference are said to be, the existence of Indra, the northern Kurus, the golden mountain Meru, the nymphs in Paradise.

[2] The rival doctrine of the Védántins is presented in the following extract: 'This soul of all worlds is but one: by *whom* is it made more? Some speak of soul as several—seeing that knowledge and other mental states are observable [simultaneously—some being happy whilst others are sad]; but in the Bráhman, the worm and the insect; in the outcaste, the dog and the elephant; in goats, cows, gadflies and gnats, the wise behold the same' [single soul]: *Ibid.* p. 24.

[3] *Ibid.* p. 27. Such a distribution, with other objects, was perhaps much older than Kapila (Lassen, *Ind. Alt.* I. 832): yet the *guna* of the Sánkhyas is no mere attribute, but a substance discernible by soul through the medium of the faculties. In Prakriti, or nature absolute and unmodified, we have the three qualities in perfect equipoise: Wilson, on *Sánk. Kár.* p. 52.

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Three 'qualities.'

They are purity or goodness (*sattwa*); imperfection, pain or foulness (*rajas*); blind indifference, stupidity or darkness (*tamas*). In proportion to the dominance obtained by one or other of the primary elements, man approaches, first, to the divine or noble; secondly, to the selfish, or the barely human; thirdly, to the bestial, the inert, or the besotted. He alone who by obeying the dictates of true philosophy rises high above the ordinary level is exempted from the risk, or rather the necessity, of emigrating step by step through various forms of bodily organisation. Here, as we have hinted, Kapila was always true to the received opinions; nay, so deeply rooted in his mind was the idea of transmigration, that he started an elaborate theory for its defence. When some began to ask, How souls which he believed to be inactive have the power of passing from one body to another? or secondly, How it happens that emancipation is not universally effected in the act of disembodiment?—his answer was, that every soul upon its first emission and association with matter, is invested also with a subtile and elastic framework (*linga-śarîra*[1]), the reflection of the more substantial body. This it cannot afterwards abandon till the hour of ultimate emancipation; and a vehicle is consequently found in which the passive soul may be transferred from one material tenement to another.

Theistic Sánkhya.

Acute, however, as the author of the Sánkhya system was, he failed eventually to satisfy the anxious questions of Hindus respecting the

[1] Colebrooke, pp. 24, 25, with Pauthier's notes. The latter points out the close affinity of this notion to certain speculations of the Greek philosophers and early Fathers of the Church, respecting the corporeity of the soul.

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Supreme Intelligence. When they demanded by *whom* the human spirit had been made to emanate, or *why* the great primordial element was individualised in human bodies, Kapila could only urge that such had been the necessary order of development, one step of some inscrutable and eternal process. The uniform vagueness of his language on these questions led to the formation of another school, entitled the 'theistic' Sánkhya[1]. It ascribed no will to *prakriti*, or the material essence; it recognised an *íśwara*, or lord, and therefore did not hesitate to preach that God exists, that God is the intelligent Source of being, that God allots those varying passions, powers and faculties which men continually exhibit, and that God is the great Judge who punishes or rewards according to their conduct. Modified by the accession of these new and better influences, the Sánkhya system grew, and flourished in some districts; though at present hardly any traces of it are discernible in the literary circles of Hindustan[2].

b. Buddhism.

From the school of Kapila to that of Buddha the transition is most obvious and direct. The close affinity between them did not escape the eye

[1] *Ibid.* pp. 34 sq. Wuttke (II. 424) is of opinion that this modification is due to Christian influences: nor is there anything in the chronology adverse to his view; for when Lassen (I. 833) places Patanjali, with whom it is associated, in the 2nd century before Christ, he allows that the evidence for so doing is extremely slight.

[2] In the present day, if it survive at all, we have to search for it among the labyrinths of German metaphysics. Prof. Wilson says: 'During the whole of my intercourse with learned natives, I met with but one Brahman who professed to be acquainted with the writings of this school.' 'Pref.' to the *Sánkhya Kárikâ*, p. viii.

of Colebrooke, and, in spite of Ritter's disbelief, the truth of his remark has been continually verified[1]. One system is indeed no more than the extension and practical embodiment of the other. I am not desirous of maintaining absolutely that principles allied in some degree to those of Buddhism were unknown to other Asiatics in still earlier times[2]. What I intend by Buddhism, is the system of metaphysical and social philosophy, organised by Śákya-muni, or Gautama Buddha. Neither am I speaking here of Buddhism in its modern development, as modified by intermixtures either with the popular forms of Bráhmanism, or with the older superstitions of the countries where it afterwards gained a footing: for that view of it will come more properly before us, when we pass from Hindustan to China, and the other regions where it still possesses a complete ascendancy. In different words, we shall be dealing now with a philosophy rather than with a religion.

General date of Buddhism.

Although in passing to a survey of the principles of Buddhism, we entirely quit the region of

[1] See, for instance, Lassen, I. 830, 831: Saint-Hilaire, *Des Védas*, p. 147. The latter observes with justice, that all the indianists 'n'hésitent pas à reconnaître dans le bouddhisme, devenu plus tard une religion, un développement et une copie du sânkhya de Kapila. La ressemblance ne peut faire le moindre doute pour qui se donnera la peine d'étudier les deux doctrines: les bases de l'une et de l'autre sont identiques.'

[2] 'It may be,' says Mr Hardy (*Manual of Budhism*, p. 88, Lond. 1853) 'that Gótama presented himself to the world as the successor of men, whose claims to supreme authority were thus acknowledged; but I have not yet met with any well-authenticated data of their doctrines or deeds.' Yet even this has been positively denied by W. von Humboldt in his great work, *Ueber die Kawi-Sprache*, I. 290: 'Sowohl die Annahme eines Vor-Brahmanischen, als eines ursprünglich Ausser-Indischen Buddhismus, bedarf keiner Widerlegung mehr.' Cf. on the other side, Col. Sykes, as above, p. 41, n. 1. I may here also add, that the religion of the Jains, which still survives in Guzerat and other parts of India, is connected in its origin, if not absolutely one with Buddhism: see Colebrooke, *Asiat. Res.* IX. 279 sq. Stuhr *Die Religions-systeme*, &c. I. 61 sq.

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the mythe and enter that of the historic legend, and although the ground we have to traverse is in general less encumbered by chronological difficulties, the point of starting has not hitherto been absolutely determined. The narratives that wear the greatest semblance of probability are the Chinese on one side, and the Sing'halese on the other; while of these conflicting authorities, the latter is preferred by nearly all competent writers of the present day[1]. The death of Gautama is thus ascribable to the year 543 B.C., *i. e.* two centuries before the date of Alexander's expedition.

Early biography of Gautama.

When the primitive story is divested of the countless fables[2] in which it has been decked by

[1] E. Burnouf, *Introduction à l'histoire du Bouddhisme indien*, Pref. p. iii. p. 587, Paris, 1844; Lassen, II. 51 sq.; Elphinstone, pp. 111, 112, 3rd ed.; Hardy, *Manual of Budhism*, p. 353. Mr Elphinstone makes the following observations, in the justice of which almost every one is now disposed to acquiesce: 'These discrepancies are too numerous to be removed by the supposition that they refer to an earlier and a later Budha; and that expedient is also precluded by the identity of the name Sakya, and of every circumstance in the lives of the persons to whom such different dates are assigned. We must, therefore, either pronounce the Indian Báudhas to be ignorant of the date of a religion which arose among themselves, and at the same time must derange the best established part of the Hindú chronology; or admit that an error must have occurred in Cashmír or Tibet, through which places it crept into the more eastern countries, when they received the religion of Budha, many centuries after the death of its founder. As the latter seems by much the most probable explanation, we may safely fix the death of Budha about 550 B.C.'

[2] See the very copious legends of Gótama (or, more properly, Gautama=a descendant of Gotama) in Mr Hardy's *Manual of Budhism*, pp. 139—353. These are drawn exclusively from Sing'halese sources, but are identical with accounts now circulated in Birmah and Siam, and have also very much in common with the Tibetan traditions, as previously reported by Csoma Körösi, and still more fully in the *Rgya Tch' er Rol Pa* (a Tibetan history of Buddha, ed. Foucaux, Paris, 1847); with the Nepálese traditions, as reported by Mr B. H. Hodgson; with the Mongolian (Tataric) traditions, as reported by M. Schmidt, and with the Chinese as preserved in the *Foe Koue Ki*, and translated by Abel Rémusat. The reader is also referred to an admirable sketch of Sákya-muni in M. Saint-Hilaire's recent work *Du Bouddhisme*, pp. 28—123, Paris, 1855, where the his-

later superstition, Gautama is there presented not as one of many incarnations of the Deity, nor as the sole receptacle of the divine Intelligence, but simply as a man,—a man of gentle, ardent, pensive, philanthropic nature. Descended from a royal house in one of the most polished provinces of central India, he was nurtured in the midst of luxury, and with the prospect of unbroken happiness. But ere he reached the flower of manhood Gautama grew weary of the pomp and pleasures of his father's court. Presentiments by which he seems to have been haunted almost from his cradle, and the ever-darkening pictures which he drew of human wretchedness and mutability, had filled his heart with sadness bordering on despair. At last, abandoning his favourite wife, he stole away entirely from the palace; and at the age of nine and twenty sought relief in the society of Bráhmans, with whom he lived six years a life of study and asceticism. It was while occupied in these pursuits, resisting the temptations to sensual pleasure, and mourning over the prostration of the universe at large, that he awoke to the idea of standing forth among his fellow-men in the capacity of liberator and reformer[1]. Hitherto he was but Śákya-muni, the 'solitary' of the race of Śákya; now he fancied

torical and legendary elements are separated with great care and acumen.

[1] He finally thought himself capable of becoming the deliverer of the whole universe. See the narrative in Saint-Hilaire, pp. 55 sq. 'Il avait enfin trouvé la voie forte du grand homme, la voie du sacrifice des sens, la voie infaillible et sans abattement, la voie de la bénédiction et de la vertu, la voie sans tache, sans envie, sans ignorance, et sans passion....la voie qui mène à la possession de la science universelle, la voie du souvenir et du jugement, la voie qui adoucit la vieillesse et la mort, la voie calme et sans trouble, exempte des craintes du démon, qui conduit à la cité du Nirvâna:' *Ibid.* p. 57.

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Foundation of Buddhism.

himself entitled to the appellation *Buddha*, 'the awakened,' 'the enlightened.' He collected, in the midst of spiritual ecstacies, that during the present cycle of the universe he was exalted to the very highest point of being, and that by renunciation of the world he had been freed from all the limitations of natural existence. For the sake, however, of promoting the emancipation of others, he did not pass away immediately into his ultimate condition. He resolved to be the founder of a school; but instead of acting like the Bráhmans, he exhibited at once the deep and comprehensive basis on which he thought a worthier fabric should be reared. He preached in public at Benares (Varanásí), and afterwards in other parts of northern and central India, fascinating a large crowd of followers, by the beauty of his person, the feminine suavity of his manners, his ardour, his austerities, the touching eloquence of his address, the mildness and philanthropy of his doctrines, his use of the vernacular language, and, according to the legends, a profuse display of wonder-working powers.

Its early propagation:

When Gautama breathed his last, at the advanced age of eighty, Buddhism had been firmly rooted in some parts of Hindustan. The sayings of the founder were gradually collected into Sútras[1],

[1] 'Sútra' is properly a 'philosophical aphorism;' but like other Sanskrit words, it acquired a technical meaning from its adoption by the Buddhists. The oldest of their *Sútras* are written, for the most part, in simple prose, the text, as now preserved, belonging to the first century after Christ. Later compositions indicate the influence of foreign admixtures, and in one the parable of the Prodigal Son is said to have been distinctly reproduced: Wuttke, II. 522: see also Saint-Hilaire, *Du Bouddhisme*, p. 126. One of the most interesting relics of 'orthodox' Buddhism is the *Lotus de la bonne Loi*, translated from the Sanskrit by Burnouf, Paris, 1852.

which, on being augmented by the Vinaya and Abhidharma (disciplinary and metaphysical treatises), became the rivals of the Vaidic literature. These all were duly authorised in synods; and ere long the doctrines which they recommended had so far prevailed that they were threatening to eradicate the ancient system. Of Hindu kings who manifested an especial interest in the spread of Buddhism, none was more conspicuous than Aśoka[1], who, on abandoning the hereditary faith, endeavoured at the middle of the third century before Christ to give the new religion a predominance in districts far beyond the boundaries of Magadha. The Bráhmans had in early times diffused their influence, either by the agency of the sword, or of religious solitaries, who, bent on self-renunciation, settled in the territory of the unbeliever, and bore silent witness to the creed and worship of their forefathers. Bráhmanism, however, could not propagate itself except by making śúdras of all people whom it vanquished; for to spread the higher elements of religious knowledge among those who were not genuine A'ryans, was believed to be peculiarly profane. Buddhism, on the other hand, made no distinction in the quality of the persons it addressed; and, in a synod held 246 B.C. a regular plan was organised for propagating the new faith by means analogous to those employed hereafter in conducting Christian *missions*,—by pacific and persuasive teaching, and translating Buddhist writings into foreign languages.

is diffused in Kashmír

The first-fruits of their mighty harvest were gathered in Kashmír: and under Ming-Ti, the

[1] See the narrative in Lassen, II. 215 sq.

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and China:

flexible creed of Buddhist emissaries won for them admission to the court of the 'celestial empire,' A.D. 61,—exactly at the time when Christianity was marching forth in all its pristine vigour to subdue the kingdoms of the western world. The Buddhists, it is true, could not eventually retain their hold on India. After thriving for a thousand years, and writing a triumphant history in monasteries and enormous temples excavated from the living rock, there came a vast and terrible revulsion in the feelings of the populace. The younger sister was violently extruded by the elder from all parts of Hindustan, if we except one scanty remnant at the foot of the Himálaya. Yet meanwhile Buddhism had evinced a property unknown to every other heathen system. It was far more capable of transplantation. It flourished with peculiar freshness and luxuriance in Tibet, and ultimately in the Tatar tribes of central Asia. Above all, it kept possession of its ancient fortress in the island of Ceylon; and thither in the early centuries of our era flocked a multitude of foreign pilgrims, anxious by such visit to abridge their term of penitential suffering, to venerate the relics of Gautama Buddha, or to kiss the print of his gigantic foot.

is expelled from India.

Points of contact with Bráhmanism.

What then were the characteristics of this marvellous system as originally constituted? Its founder, we discern at once, had common ground with Bráhmanism, which, notwithstanding, he endeavoured to demolish. He took for granted the hereditary doctrine of transmigration; he argued, like his predecessors, for eternal cycles of the universe, and infinite successions of births and new births. It was a fundamental article of the Buddhist

creed that 'he who is now the most degraded of the demons may one day rule the highest of the heavens; he who is at present seated upon the most honourable of the celestial thrones may one day writhe amidst the agonies of a place of torment; and the worm that we crush under our feet may, in the course of ages, become a supreme Buddha[1].' It was also held that liberation from this terrible necessity of repeated births was the grand aim of all religions. Buddhism, in like manner, recognised the wretchedness of individual being, and fell in with the prevailing tendency to quietude, to mortification of the flesh, to abstract and ecstatic contemplation.

Assails the Védas and the established religion.

In many other points, where it diverged entirely from the old religion, it was following, consciously or unconsciously, the path marked out by Kapila, and trodden by his disciples. The founder of the Sánkhya philosophy had taught that Brahmá himself was only at the head of the elemental creation, and, as such, was finite, mortal, subject to contingencies like pain and ignominy. The supreme authority of the Védas might accordingly be questioned; their tenets might be all subordinated to other forms of knowledge. Gautama intensified this feeling, and completed the Sánkhya innovation by rejecting the Védas altogether. As the 'enlightened' one, and as believing in the infinite capacity of his own intellect, he placed his tripod far above[2] the throne

[1] Hardy, *Manual of Budhism*, p. 36. Saint-Hilaire, *Du Bouddhisme*, p. 183, seems of opinion that in the possible extent to which transmigration may be carried, Buddhism is even more exacting than Bráhmanism.

[2] This affinity between Kapila and Gautama is pointed out in Lassen, I. 831. In the Sing'halese Buddhism of the present day, which is largely intermixed with Bráhmanical

of beings like Brahmá, or Mahéswara; he was himself the 'lord and teacher,' not of one section of the universe, but of all 'the three worlds.'

Buddhist doctrine of sin.

Another blow inflicted by him on the old religion, and especially on the power of the Bráhmanical order, was the absolute rejection of animal sacrifice. Some indication of a like repugnance is traceable to early times[1], and in the creed of Kapila, the shedding of blood was openly denounced as one example of 'impurity[2].' But in Buddhism the rejection rests on deeper and more subtle grounds. The Buddhist has no consciousness of guilt, because he utterly denies the freedom of the creature. Sin is in his view a necessary thing: it is a cosmical and not a personal evil: its vitiation is inherent in the world of matter, and inseparable from all forms of transient being. If the Buddhist sins, the punishment which nature has attached to his demerit will inevitably take effect: the law *must* have its course. He therefore manifests no wish for reconcilement: he has no idea of mediation, of satisfaction, of propitiation[3]. On the other hand, a keener insight into all the possible consequences of the Hindu doctrine of transmigration would naturally serve to deepen his repugnance to traditionary usages

elements, the Mahá-Brahmá is notwithstanding only the ruler of a 'bráhma-lóka:' Hardy, p. 41.

[1] See Roth, *Nirukta*, 'Einl.' p. xxxiii.

[2] See above, p. 49, n. 2.

[3] Cf. Mr Thomson's *Bampton Lectures*, pp. 44, 45. In speaking of Sing'halese Buddhism at the present day, Sir E. Tennent observes that 'neither in heaven nor on earth can man (according to the Buddhist doctors) escape from the consequences of his acts; that morals are in their essence productive causes, without the aid or intervention of any higher authority; and hence forgiveness and atonement are ideas utterly unknown.'

involving the destruction of animal life[1]: from both which causes it results that Buddhism stands conspicuous in the midst of heathendom as a religion without sacrificial cultus. The very name of sacrifice (*yajna*) has been discarded, and the simple worship of the Buddhists almost universally restricted to the offering up of prayers and flowers and perfumes, in memory of their founder. It is true that orders of religious teachers[2], corresponding to the Christian clergy, were instituted as early as the reign of Aśoka; but excepting in the Lama-hierarchy of Tibet, which may hereafter call[3] for more particular notice, Buddhist priests perform no functions that are strictly sacerdotal; they are rather confraternities of mendicants, who act as patterns of the sternest form of self-renunciation, or as mere teachers of the populace.

Buddhist view of the caste-system.

It was contended in the class-rooms of the Sánkhya philosophy that human spirits, in whatever bodies they may dwell, are all intrinsically equal. Gautama was also a believer in this doctrine, and went so far as to reduce it into practice. He could not shut his eyes, indeed, to the existence of the caste-system; and, accepting it as an established fact, attributed distinctions in the various orders of society to differences of conduct in a

[1] 'The Báudha religionists carry their respect for animal life much further than the Bramins: their priests do not eat after noon, nor drink after dark, for fear of swallowing minute insects; and they carry a brush on all occasions, with which they carefully sweep every place before they sit down, lest they should inadvertently crush any living creature.' Elphinstone, p. 107. Still, at the present day, as the same writer adds in a note, 'the laity eat animal food without restraint; even the priests may eat it, if no animal is killed on their account.'

[2] Burnouf, *Hist. du Bouddhisme*, pp. 293 sq.; Wuttke, II. 557.

[3] See *Appendix* II.

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former life: but notwithstanding such admission, men of every caste were equally invited to his lectures, and arranged according to their age and worth; and, as he taught that all, whatever be their natural gifts or opportunities or condition, are entitled to the same spiritual advantages, and have access to the means of liberation, he prepared his hearers for the ultimate dissolution of the caste-system[1], and the overthrow of Bráhmanism. Indeed the universe itself, and not the narrow confines of the A'ryan tribes, was chosen as the theatre on which the new religion sought to operate: the Buddha, though he taught in northern Hindustan, was anxious to deliver and enlighten all things.

(1) But besides these general principles, there were, in Buddhism, other characteristics which deserve particular consideration. Some of them may be regarded as speculative, or metaphysical; the rest as practical, or moral. In Kapila's system, we already noticed, the idea of God was never prominent: it was in danger of evaporating altogether in the midst of philosophical refinements. But Gautama went further still: the system which he founded is more openly atheistic. It not only disregarded, but denied the one eternal God, the Maker and the Ruler of all other forms of being. Whatever symptoms of intelligence and design, whatever powers of organisation it might recognise, they all were held to be inherent properties of matter. The world and all things in it rise into existence, are transformed, and ultimately vanish in obedience to some natural order, some inscrutable

Was Buddhism atheistic?

[1] It is retained, however, in Ceylon: Hardy, pp. 71, 78.

necessity: they are like regular undulations of the ocean flowing one into another; they are links in some eternal chain of causes and effects. To Bráhmans God is everything; to Buddhists God is nothing. Bráhmanism, when fully and minutely analysed, is found to be all centre; Buddhism all circumference. The first contended, that because the abstract Brahma is one only and immutable, all things subject to mutation are unreal; they merely seem to be. The second argued, that because all things are now multiform and mutable, they cannot have a single and immutable basis. In the one, the spirit underlying every form of matter is an efflux of the Godhead; in the other, while the world appears to be undeified, the only God is not confessed. The Buddhist breaks entirely loose from the ideal pantheism of the Bráhman, but he finds no refuge in the sanctuary of truth; his creed is purely negative and nihilistic. Exception[1] may perhaps be made in favour of one school or sect, the Buddhists of Nepál, who, owing to their close proximity to Bráhmanism, or other causes, seem to have inherited a loftier and more spiritual faith, transferring their idea of God to one supreme Intelligence, whom they designate A'di-Buddha: but of Buddhism, as it stands depicted in the oldest class of monuments, we need not hesitate to affirm, that no single trace survives[2] in it of a

Theistic sect in Nepál.

[1] See Elphinstone, pp. 104, 105. Wuttke, following Burnouf, is, however, of opinion that the sect is comparatively modern (II. 529), especially as no trace of it is found in China, and as the nearest approximation to such theism in the speculative philosophy of the Buddhists (see Hodgson, in *Asiat. Researches*, XVI. 435 sq.) does not go beyond the Sánkhya doctrine of a spiritual essence.

[2] 'In den Sutra und den wichtigsten andern Religionsschriften ist keine Spur eines höchsten weltbildenden Wesens:' Wuttke, II. 527.

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Supreme Being, either like the Ôm of the Vaidic period, or the Brahma of the Laws of Manu. Buddhism even went so far as to reject the Sánkhya theory of an active material essence, on the ground that all such arguments are contradicted by the mutable phenomena of the universe. 'Beings are not created,' says a writing of high authority among the Buddhists, 'by one God, or lord (*íśwara*), neither by one spirit (*purusha*), neither by matter (*pradhána*). If there were indeed a single cause of all things, as God, or spirit, or matter, then, by the simple fact of the existence of this cause, must the world at once have been created in its entirety, since a cause cannot exist without producing its due effect. But all things may be seen to come into the world, according to a law of succession, some issuing from the parent-womb, others from the germ. It must accordingly be concluded that there is a series of causes, and that God is not the single cause[1].'

Buddhist doctrine of causation.

To elucidate this doctrine of causation was indeed one principal object in the teaching of 'the sons of Sákya.' They believed that theoretically the first approach to liberation involves a knowledge of the

In this verdict concur Burnouf, Schmidt (as there cited, p. 529); Tennent (*Christianity in Ceylon*, p. 208, note); Hardy, *Manual of Budhism*, p. 399; Saint-Hilaire, *Du Bouddhisme*, p. 245. It should, however, be stated on the other side, that Col. Sykes (*Journal of Asiat. Soc.* VI. 377) endeavours to screen the Buddhists from the charge of atheism. His chief appeal is to a curious hymn, composed, as many think, by Gautama himself, at the moment when he became Buddha. It is printed, with three versions somewhat differing, in Mr Hardy's *Manual*, pp. 180, 181: but there is nothing in it to militate against the view here adopted. It merely states that Gautama had found the 'artificer' of the human frame, *i.e.* the key explaining the true doctrine of existence, and had thus secured exemption from all future wanderings.

[1] Quoted from the *Yasomitra*, in Burnouf, p. 572.

Twelve-fold chain of causes.

way in which all life has been produced. Starting, therefore, with the old hypothesis, that the cycles of the universe had no beginning, individual life, with all its ills and accidents, its faculties of mind and body, is traceable backwards through twelve stages[1] to the first term in the circle of generation, which is 'ignorance' (*avidyá*), and consists in mistaking for durable that which is but evanescent and precarious; or, in other words, assigning to the universe a reality which it does not actually possess. For Buddhism, in this matter, went beyond the elder system; it regarded all 'the three worlds' as 'empty[2],' as no better than a shadowy and illusive phantom. Having lost all faith in God the Author of the universe, the Buddhist was propelled to the conclusion, that the sensible forms around him ought not to exist: they had no right to be, and therefore since they are, they must be evil; and the object was accordingly to liberate all sentient creatures from their bondage to the non-existent. So entirely was the mind of Gautama possessed by this idea, that of the elementary lessons which he taught men in conjunction with his doctrine of the twelve-fold chain of causes, nearly all had reference to the rise and remedy of human suffering. The universality of that suffering, its

'Four grand verities.'

[1] See Saint-Hilaire, pp. 188—190. This 'ignorance' is an abstract quality producing another abstract quality, merit and demerit, *karma;* which *karma* gives birth to a third abstraction, consciousness; and this being endowed with physical power, produces body and mind, and so on: Hardy, p. 392. Yet the Buddhist does not profess to enlighten us either respecting the origin of *avidyá*, or the manner in which *karma* operates.

[2] Schmidt has pointed out (*Mémoires de l'Académie de Saint Pétersbourg*, I. 98 sq.) that the two main principles of Buddhism are (1) that the three worlds are empty, and (2) that there is no difference between being and non-being.

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birth from passion and desire, the possibility of escaping from it, and the method of escape, these constitute the 'four grand verities[1]' impressed in early youth upon the memory of Buddhists.

'*Nirvána.*'

And if the special character of this deliverance be investigated, we find it summed up in the word *nirvána*, 'extinction,' 'blowing out.' Such was the supreme felicity of the Buddha: such the goal to which he ever pointed the aspirations of his followers. It was formerly disputed whether more is meant by the expression *nirvána* than 'eternal quietude,' 'unbroken sleep,' 'impenetrable apathy:' but the oldest literature of Buddhism will scarcely suffer us to doubt that Gautama intended by it nothing short of absolute 'annihilation[2],' the destruction of all elements which constitute existence.

Neither Bráhmanism nor Buddhism could feel happy in the present world: to both it was a prison-house, a place of torture and of ignominy. But the gulf between the two rival systems was in this respect immeasurable. Bráhmanism contended that true being does exist beyond the world of phenomena (Sansára); Buddhism, that being is the same in all the 'three worlds,' but nowhere is possessed of more than the appearance of reality. The Bráhman, writhing under the calamities of life, was anxious to emancipate himself as soon as possible from the world of phantoms, that he

[1] Saint-Hilaire, p. 127.

[2] *Ibid.* pp. 195 sq.; Burnouf, *Hist. du Bouddhisme*, p. 589: Wuttke, II. 570. The last writer (p. 571) cites the following passage from a Mongolian catechism: 'Der Sansára [*i. e.* the world of appearance] ist seiner Wesenheit nach *leer*, seiner Form nach trügerisch, seinen Wirkungen nach verderblich: Nirvána ist auch seiner Wesenheit nach *leer*, aber er vernichtet jede Täuschung und befreit von allem Uebel.'

might revert to his original oneness with divinity: the Buddhist, driven to desperation by witnessing the same calamities, was no less anxious to escape, but was content if he could ultimately pass beyond the verge of that enchanted circle which was fatal to his peace, and so attain to non-existence. Both alike gave utterance to the grief which preyed upon their inmost being: but the Buddhist sorrowed as the man who has no hope; and his philosophy is therefore the philosophy of despair.

Buddhist ethics.

(2) But while we charge the creed of Gautama with atheism and nihilism, we must acknowledge that it rose in one respect superior to all other heathen systems,—in the loftier tone of its morality. It was a *practical*, and not a speculative philosophy, concerning itself not with God and the invisible, but with the charities and duties of the present life. Here indeed we find the secret of its mightiness, the key to its majestic progress in the whole of eastern Asia. The grand picture of a royal youth, abandoning his home and honours to become the gentle, apt, and sympathetic teacher of the people, was alone sufficient to evoke a class of sentiments forgotten by the old religions. And in course of time fresh arguments were found to strengthen the devotion which this picture of philanthropy excited. 'A great part of the respect paid to Gótama Budha arises from the supposition that he voluntarily endured, throughout myriads of ages, and in numberless births, the most severe deprivations and afflictions, that he might thereby gain the power to free sentient beings from the misery to which they are exposed under every possible form of existence. It is thought that myriads

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of ages previous to his reception of the Budhaship, he might have become a *rahat* [one who is entirely rescued from all evil desire], and therefore ceased to exist; but that of his own free-will he forewent the privilege, and threw himself into the stream of successive existence, for the benefit of the three worlds[1].' Nor was the founder of Buddhism merely anxious to exhibit his commiseration for the calamities of other men. He laid unwonted stress on social and domestic duties, while the Bráhmans, in their teaching, rather aimed at the production of ceremonial punctuality.

Precepts and prohibitions.

Believing that, in spite of some paramount necessity, the individual has the power of punishing himself by an illicit course of action, every Buddhist, whether lay or cleric, was enjoined[2] to kill no living thing, to be honest in his dealings, to indulge no sensual appetites, to abstain from lying, and intoxicating liquors; while a further series of more rigorous injunctions was provided for the guidance of the monks, the celibates, the devotees. In carrying out these regulations it is easy to perceive that the most exemplary Buddhists had no true idea of the distinctive properties of soul and body, and of their reciprocal relations. On the one

[1] Hardy, *Manual of Budhism*, p. 98: cf. Prof. Max Müller, in Mr Thompson's *Bampton Lectures*, p. 36. One of the reflections ascribed to the youthful Gautama in a Tibetan biography is to the same effect (in Saint-Hilaire, p. 39): 'En faisant voir la clarté de la loi aux créatures obscurcies par les ténèbres d'une ignorance profonde, je leur donnerai l'œil qui voit clairement les choses; je leur donnerai le beau rayon de la pure sagesse, l'œil de la loi, sans tache et sans corruption.'

[2] The list of commandments varies somewhat in different writings: see Stuhr, I. 180, Prichard, IV. 124. Upham (*Historical and sacred Books of Ceylon*, III. 12, 158; cf. pp. 162, 163) gives a list, ten in number, more closely resembling the second table of the Decalogue.

side, they identified intelligence with sensibility[1]: on the other, they regarded the external organs as the only seat of evil and the single enemy of mankind. The body was even treated by them as consubstantial with brute matter; and to curb its wayward passions, to seal up the various inlets of temptation, to mortify and extirpate the sensual appetites, and by *dhyána*, 'contemplation,' rivet the desires exclusively upon the ultimate destination of the human subject, was the highest aim of ethical philosophy. The conviction of present wretchedness, which throws a shade of melancholy over the whole life of the Buddhist devotee and furnishes a clue to most of his speculations, is thus deepened by a course of self-inflicted torture. So far indeed was he bent on carrying his renunciation of the sensible world and its enjoyments, that he stigmatised his Bráhman rival as a man who lived in bondage to the present and the visible[2].

Self-denial and austerities.

Nor was passive self-control the only point to which importance was attached in Buddhist ethics. Man was there exhorted to promote his extrication from the bonds of individuality by sharing the calamities of others: he was to facilitate his own escape by making others rise superior to the fatal law of transmigration. It is probable that

Sympathy with other sufferers.

[1] See Saint-Hilaire, p. 226.

[2] Stuhr, I. 187. 'Chose étrange,' says M. Pavie, referring to some moral maxims of the Buddhists, 'ceux qui méditent sur ces belles pages, au lieu de conclure qu'il y a une autre vie où l'âme humaine doit trouver la satisfaction de ses immenses désirs, se retirent dans une négation déscspérée. Ils dédaignent tous les biens de la vie comme une illusion, comme un leurre qui séduit l'esprit et l'entraîne dans le tourbillon des naissances à venir. Mieux vaut pour eux cesser d'être, s'abîmer dans un incompréhensible néant: c'est donc l'art de mourir une fois pour toutes, que le novice vient étudier dans le monastère:' *Revue des Deux Mondes*, 1854, Tome v. p. 133.

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here and there a Buddhist might be influenced by the same generous self-devotion which had characterised the framer of his creed: but generally his eye was fastened on the prospect of remuneration; he believed that by assisting others he should be smoothing his own pathway to *nirvána*. Merit, with demerit the correlative, is the power by which, according to Buddhism, the destiny of all sentient beings is controlled[1]; and when this principle was fully apprehended the acquisition of a stock of merits became the great concern of life: religion was converted into a regular system of profits and losses[2].

General mildness of the Buddhist.

Still we must not overlook the emphasis which Buddhism uniformly placed upon a class of gentle and retiring virtues, which were well-nigh banished from the rest of heathendom,—meekness, resignation, equanimity under suffering, forgiveness of injuries. Much as these are found to differ from the corresponding virtues of the Christian, and symptomatic as they often are of womanly, instead of manly and heroic qualities, they could scarcely fail to benefit a multitude of savage tribes to which they were propounded. For example, when the Buddhist finds himself assailed by calumny or open violence, he restrains his animosity by reflecting that the blow has been necessitated by misdemeanors committed in some previous existence. He is thankful that no heavier penance has fallen to his lot, and even at the last extremity, when death itself must be confronted, he can welcome it as

[1] Hardy, p. 445. *Karma* is properly 'that which is to be done.'

[2] *Ibid.* p. 507, where reference is made to the Chinese practice of keeping a debtor and creditor account of the acts of each day, and transferring the balance from one year to another: see also Saint-Hilaire, pp. 215 sq.

the appointed means of liberation from 'this unclean body[1].'

Why his system was comparatively fruitless.

Truth, however, calls for the addition, that fair and lovely as might be the outward forms of Buddhism, its inherent principles were such as made it well-nigh powerless in the training of society, and therefore it has left the countries which it overran the prey of superstition and of demon-worship, of political misrule and spiritual lethargy. Confessing no supreme God, who is at once the Legislator and the Judge, its moral code was ultimately void of all authority. Denying also the true dignity and freedom of the human agent, it invested moral sentiments and relations with a kind of physical outsidedness; they were all parts of a great system with which the fortunes of the Buddhist, why he knew not, were mechanically connected. He spoke indeed of 'laws,' but these were only common rules of action, according to which all things are found to happen[2]: vice had no intrinsic hideousness, and virtue was another name for calculating prudence; while love itself was in the creed of Buddhism little more than animal sympathy, or the condolence of one sufferer with his fellow. Buddhism also could discourse of 'duty;' but such duty, as it had no object and no standard, was devoid of moral motive: it shrank into a lifeless acquiescence in some stern necessity, a blind submission to some iron law. The Buddhist's principle of action was 'I must;' he could not say 'I ought.'

[1] Wuttke, II. 579.

[2] See Mr R. A. Thompson's *Christian Theism*, I. 187 sq. on the ethics of Spinosa.

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c. The Eclectic School of India.

Hindu asceticism.

To understand the origin of this eclectic school we must remember that, in addition to the systems of philosophy already noticed, there had been from early times a strong and passionate bias in favour of asceticism[1]. Partly owing to the climate, which induced inertness and disposed to contemplation, man had at the close of the Vaidic age begun to muse profoundly on the paradoxes of the world around him. He sighed for peace and unity, and everything that thwarted this desire and made him conscious of his isolation and estrangement from the primal source of being, he was anxious to repudiate and uproot. He also mused upon the conflicts which he felt among the moral elements of his nature, and ere long arrived at the conclusion that the seat of all disorder is the region of the senses. By indulging these he was persuaded that the soul is lured from the pursuit of spiritual and heavenly things, and therefore drew up special rules of discipline by which the downward tendency might be corrected and reversed. By 'exercise and dispassion,' by 'asceticism and mortification,' the mind was thought to be capable of reaching a state of absolute calm in which one single object may be contemplated to the exclusion of all others. This object was at first to be the Lord (*íśwara*):

[1] See Wuttke, II. 362 sq. The old Bráhmanical ascetic was first known as *Śramańa* (cf. the Σαρμᾶναι of Megasthenes); but after the time of Aśoka, the word seems to have been exclusively assigned to the Buddhist devotees (Lassen, II. 449, 700, n. 3). It still exists in the Pali form *Samana*, and is sometimes used by the Chinese Buddhists as equivalent to 'priest,' but must not in that connexion be confounded with the *shaman* of demon-worship.

'but as the practised swimmer parts with his last cork or bladder, so the soul of the ascetic must in due course part with every object, and at length meditate without an object at all[1].' His principles, as wrought into a system, constitute the *Yoga school* of Hindu philosophy, in which the *yogin*, or devotee, aspires to perfect union ('yoking') with the Divine Being.

The object of the Bhagavad-Gítá.

At last, perhaps when many centuries[2] had been allowed for the development of these tendencies, there rose in northern Hindustan a poet and philosopher, who while faithful to the main positions of the ancient Bráhman, sought to reconcile his metaphysical tenets with the speculations of the Sánkhya school; and while confessing the advantages to be derived from the contemplative mode of life, contended that principles of self-renunciation were reconcileable with devotion to all active duties. This writer was himself a Bráhman and a Vaishńava, *i. e.* a member of the sect which had invested Vishńu[3] with the attributes of the Supreme Being, and which worshipped him in preference to the rival Siva. The work which he composed, the Bhagavad-Gítá[4], was dexterously

[1] See *Aphorisms of the Yoga*, Bk. I. §§ 17, 18, ed. Ballantyne.

[2] It is now generally conceded that the date of the Bhagavad-Gítá is post-Christian. Even Lassen, who contends for the antiquity of Krishńa-worship, places this poem in a later period of Hindu history, 'in welcher die Vishnuiten in Secten zerfielen und ihre Religionslehre mit philosophischen Lehren in Einklang zu bringen versuchten:' II. 494. Mr J. C. Thomson, its recent editor and translator (Hertford, 1855), is disposed to place it between 100 B.C. and 300 A.D.

[3] See, for instance, ch. XVIII. (p. 121 of Mr Thomson's translation), where Arjuna is charged by his divine instructor not to reveal his knowledge to misbelievers or revilers of Krishńa, the incarnate form of Vishńu.

[4] This poem is, for the most part, a colloquy between Arjuna and Krishńa. Arjuna is one of the sons

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inlaid by him in one of the great literary monuments of his forefathers, where 'it reads like a noble fragment of Empedocles or Lucretius introduced into the midst of an Homeric epic[1].' The later portions of it are chiefly occupied with philosophical theories which were already glanced at in our survey of the Sánkhya system; and indeed the only novel feature of speculative value is the effort made to harmonise the varying elements of that system by supposing the material and spiritual essences to be alike eternal, 'by uniting them in one Supreme Being, and thus making nature, or the material essence, a portion of the great eternal Deity[2].' Here indeed the teaching of the Bhagavad-Gítá seems to have approximated to the theism of revealed religion[3]; but a closer

The theology.

of Páńdu, and after being in banishment for years, is making a grand effort to dethrone his uncle and cousin by whom he had been iniquitously expelled. His sufferings moved the pity of Vishńu (Krishńa), who had become his bosom-friend, his councillor and charioteer. When the dialogue opens, the two hostile armies are drawn up in battle-array, but Arjuna recoils from the encounter on reflecting that it must lead to the slaughter of his near relations. The object of Krishńa is to overrule this feeling.

[1] *Quarterly Review*, Vol. XLV. pp. 6, 7.

[2] See Mr Thomson's 'Introd.' pp. xcv. xcvi.

[3] The following extract from a rapturous prayer of Arjuna, on discovering the real greatness and supreme divinity of his companion, should be cited here, because it has few parallels in the whole area of Hindu literature: 'The universe, O Krishńa! is justly delighted with thy glory, and devoted to thee. The Rákshasas [evil spirits] flee, affrighted, to the divers quarters of heaven, and all the multitudes of the Siddhas [demi-gods] salute thee. And, indeed, why should they not adore thee, O great one! thee, the first creator, more important even than Brahmá himself? O infinite king of gods! habitation of the universe! thou art the one indivisible, the existing and not existing [spirit and matter], that which is supreme. Thou art the first of the gods, the most ancient person. Thou art the supreme receptacle of this universe. Thou knowest all, and mayest be known, and art the supreme mansion. By thee is this universe caused to emanate, O thou of endless forms. ...Thou All! Of infinite power and immense might, thou comprehendest all; therefore thou art All. As

survey will convince us that the two ideas are really incompatible. For since matter in the Hindu system remains an independent substance, coessential with divinity, or since God is there supposed to fashion all things by changing Himself into the material universe, His own supremacy is so far questioned and invaded; while by attributing to every individual a portion of the Supreme Being, which, according to that later system, exists in him together with his own individual soul, each form of animated nature is said to have within it particles of divinity; and on this ground polytheism, hero-worship, and even animal-worship, are reasserted and defended[1].

The ethical system.

It is, however, to the ethical portions[2] of the poem that I draw attention more particularly, as enabling us to trace the highest flight of philosophical Hinduism, in its efforts to determine the right course of human conduct.

Reassertion of the law of caste.

(1) A primary object of the writer was to vindicate the institution of caste, which had been sorely shaken by the Buddhist revolutions, and perhaps we may infer impugned by members of the Kshatriya-class, who were beginning to exceed

I took thee merely for a friend, I beseech thee without measure to pardon whatever I may, in ignorance of this thy greatness, have said from negligence or affection, such as, O Krishńa! O son of Yadu! O friend! and everything in which I may have treated thee in a joking manner, in recreation, repose, sitting, or meals, whether in private, or in the presence of these, eternal One! Thou art the father of the animate and inanimate world.' ch. XI. (transl. pp. 79, 80). Krishńa had already (ch. VII. pp. 51 sq.) prepared his companion for this outburst of adoration, by declaring, 'I am the cause of the production and dissolution of the whole universe. There exists no other thing superior to me.... On me is all the universe suspended, as numbers of pearls on a string;' adding also, that he was the mystic syllable *Ôm* in all the Védas.

[1] Cf. 'Introd.' as before, p. cii.

[2] Ch. I.—ch. VI., ch. XII., ch. XVIII.

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their own province. So absolute and so inviolable, it is taught, are duties which the law of caste imposes, that these transcend and overpower all earthly considerations. For example, it was the intention of the poet to establish that love of kindred, though a virtue in itself, must be sacrificed whenever it is generating in the warrior's breast a feeling of compassion for his enemies. His province is to fight, and fight he must on all occasions, and at any cost whatever. 'It is better to do one's own duty, even though it be devoid of excellence, than to perform another's duty well[1].'

New theory of genuine devotion.

(2) The second object is to modify the Yoga-doctrines in such a manner that devout persons may feel under no pressing obligation to consume their lives in violent austerities and maceration of the body. The author does not, it is true, deny the efficacy and numerous excellences of that older system; but he argues[2] that when transformed into the *Karma-Yoga*, by adapting principles of renunciation (*sannyása*) to all the duties of common-life, it is still worthier of acceptance, and of greater efficacy in forwarding the process of emancipation. In the earlier system men's surrender of the world was outward, local, physical; in the later it was to become more inward, spiritual, and complete. The one, persuaded that evil always enters through the inlet of the senses, laboured to impair and so destroy the sinful medium; the other, acquiescing in this doctrine as to the peculiar province of

[1] See p. 26, and, more fully, pp. 118 sq. In pp. 66, 67, there is a passage which intimates that members of the vaiśya-class had now fallen, rather than risen in the scale of religious privileges, for they are ranked with 'women and Śúdras.'

[2] 'Introd.' as before, p. cviii.

temptation, urged the duty of subjugating the heart in such a manner that sensual impressions were disarmed and made inoperative. In other words, the way to overcome the world, was not to leave it, and seek out asylums in the jungle, but to extirpate all wishes and affections that produced attachment to it. Action was the proper element in which the devotee should undergo his training; yet action was at last to be entirely free from passion or emotion, and entirely irrespective of all consequences. 'Let the motive for action be always in the action itself, never in its reward[1].' 'He into whom all desires enter in the same manner as rivers enter the ocean, which is [always] full, yet does not move its bed, can obtain tranquillity; but not he who loves desires[2].' The author did not, it is true, deny that adequate reward is always given to acts of ritual worship. On the contrary, he maintained that whenever actions are performed with interested motives they involve[3] the agent in a series of necessary bonds or consequences (*karma-bandha*); sometimes purchasing admission for him to the heaven of Indra; sometimes, where he is the victim of base fear, and sacrifices to the demons, entailing on him an abode in less exalted spheres of being. Yet the one reward, and that which to the Hindu is alone desirable, was allotted to a different class of devotees. Where true devotion, action without passion, filled the spirit of the worshipper, he

[1] Ch. II. (p. 16). In the previous page there is a remarkable passage reflecting on those who were misled by 'flowery' sentences to assign the chief importance to the letter of precepts quoted from the Védas.

[2] Ch. III. (p. 19).

[3] Ch. IV. (pp. 31 sq.).

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soared directly upwards to his ultimate condition. Having learned to concentrate his thoughts entirely on the Supreme Being, he obtained a perfect mastery over his whole nature: he subdued not only the irregular appetites, but every movement of the natural affections; he was 'of the same mind to friends, acquaintances and enemies, to the indifferent and the neutral, to aliens and relatives, to the good and bad[1].' As 'candles placed in shelter from the wind do not flicker,' so this perfect devotee has been translated far above the sphere of earthly perturbations: he is utterly unmanned.

Subsequent inertness of the Hindu mind.

Such may be regarded as the last development of Hindu philosophy; for the monuments of the succeeding, or Puranic period, notwithstanding all the rich profusion of mythological novelties, give few if any indications of mental progress. Here and there the surface of religious thought may have been rippled, for a while, by the attempts of earnest individuals[2] to remodel the ancestral creed and lead men back to primitive institutions. The Korán also, borne along the bloody stream of Arab conquest, was for ages dominant in various parts of India, but infused no higher life into the native population. Excepting the religious movements headed by Nanuk in the fifteenth century, and by Akbar in the sixteenth, both advancing

[1] Ch. VI. (p. 44).

[2] One of the most remarkable was the learned Brahman, Ram-mohun-Roy, who laboured in the first quarter of the present century to expound the Védánta philosophy among his fellow-countrymen, with the hope of establishing a more general belief in one only God. Since his death a society, calling itself *Tatwa-bodhini Sabhá* ('Truth-expounding Society'), and meditating the same object, has continued to exist at Calcutta: see *Journal of the As. Soc.* XIII. 210.

from eclectic principles in the direction of a purer form of deism, the historian of Hindu philosophy will have little to record of universal interest till the master-minds of the Peninsula shall start from their lethargic slumber, and shall learn to vibrate once again beneath the potent touch of Christianity.

CHAPTER II.

Apparent Correspondencies between Hinduism and Revealed Religion.

.... 'So werden wir es unmöglich finden, in der Indischen Religion eine Quelle oder eine Rivalin in Beziehung auf die Grundidee des Christenthums zu finden.' DORNER.

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Relations of Hinduism to Christianity.

Two inferences are commonly drawn by the opponents of Christianity from the remarkable series of phenomena exhibited in the foregoing chapter. It has been alleged (1) that those exalted products of man's theorising faculty will prove how very much of truth may be discovered without invoking the assistance of particular revelations; and that consequently we are justified in treating the Gospel as one of many signs of spiritual activity, as a further egress and embodiment of 'the religion of nature,' as a novel way of working out ideas and instincts latent in the breast of all the human species. Or else it is objected (2) that both Hinduism and Christianity are for the most part vestiges of some primeval and barbaric superstition, from which it is reserved for true philosophy and the doctors of the Absolute Religion to emancipate alike the churches and the world.

As my present object is chiefly historical, I shall say nothing of the contradictions involved in these two different pleas of modern scepticism. Both of them I hope to answer most effectually by ascertaining how far alleged resemblances

between the Christian and heathen systems really extend, and then suggesting in each case what seems the obvious medium of communication or the natural ground of correspondence.

Some general observations, bearing both on this and on the following chapter, will be necessary by way of preface.

Theory of primeval prophecies.

1. It must be pleaded that the cogency of many arguments which unbelief has urged against the supernatural character of Christianity is due to indiscreet assertions of the Christian apologist. Exaggerating the amount of light possessed in primitive times by the adherents of revealed religion; exaggerating also the antiquity of many Gentile systems which were made almost coeval with the first dispersion of mankind, he frequently approached the study of such systems with a confident expectation of detecting in them fresh analogies to truths which have been only brought to light by the announcements of the Gospel. When, for instance, a new world of intellectual enterprise was opened through the cultivation of Sanskrit literature, it was presumed by numbers of our fellow-countrymen who led the way in those researches, that the harvest to be reaped in India would not only confirm the older portions of Mosaic history, but also rescue from oblivion many a clear and pointed prophecy of the Incarnation and the Cross. If man had always, from the infancy of time, been fully conscious of these central facts of our religion, why not search for remnants of such knowledge and expressions of such consciousness in all parts of heathendom? That dim traditions of the Fall of man, that distant echoes

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of some promise of redemption do in fact survive wherever human steps have wandered, will be shewn hereafter when we come to *real* parallelisms between the Christian and other systems: but the sanguine expectations of mythologists were doomed to disappointment, when, assuming that the old deposit of traditionary knowledge had been well-nigh coextensive with the field of revelation, they attempted to translate familiar mythes of Hindustan into the language of the Old and New Testament. Nor did the evil consequences of the theory cease with its explosion. Works, in which it was developed, are still found to operate injuriously upon the cause of true religion, by supplying scoffs and cavils to that class of misbelievers who would fain reduce the Gospels to a level with the sacred books of India. 'Zeal,' says a thoughtful writer on the Hindu pantheon, 'sometimes has in its results the same effect as infidelity, and one cannot help lamenting that a superstructure requiring so little support should be encumbered by awkward buttresses, so ill applied, that they would, if it were possible, diminish the stability of the building that they were intended to uphold. Of this description were the zealous researches of some missionaries, who, in Brahmá and Saraswatí, easily found Abraham and Sarah; and the Christian Trinity is as readily discovered in the monstrous triad of the Hindus. Of this description also, I am disposed to think, are the attempts at bending so many of the events of Krishńa's life to tally with those, real or typical, of Jesus Christ[1].'

[1] Moor, *Hindu Pantheon*, p. 200, Lond. 1810. In Maurice's *Hist. of Hindostan*, II. 225, Lond. 1824, and in Mr Haslam's more recent work,

Theory of diabolic counter-feits.

2. There is another mode of contemplating such phenomena which deserves a passing notice, chiefly from the fact that it was sanctioned by those venerable writers who first struggled, hand to hand, with pagans in defence of Christianity. It rests, however, on a vague presumption rather than on tangible and valid evidence. Its authors argue that heathendom, in regions where the light of genuine prophecy was quenched, had been occasionally misled by 'diabolic mimicries' of Christianity, projected by malignant demons, who, in order to preoccupy the spirit of their votaries and indispose men to accept the Gospel, coined a number of those base equivalents which still pass current in the Gentile world. Accordingly it is believed that, in addition to the series of primeval facts, which, under somewhat different versions, were preserved in most heathen countries, certain rites and dogmas, which are commonly held to be of Christian origin, had been already counterfeited and caricatured in far older creeds: and hence a living writer has not scrupled to contend that 'no external resemblances to any part whatever of the catholic system form any kind of presumption against that system, seeing that such anticipations of *parts* of it are, upon this theory, to be expected[1].'

The Cross and the Serpent, pp. 149 sq. Lond. 1849, the legend of Krishńa is confidently regarded as a remnant of some primeval tradition concerning the future life of the Redeemer.

[1] See Mr Morris's *Essay towards the conversion of learned and philosophical Hindus*, pp. 201 sq. Lond. 1843, where the opinions of the Fathers on this subject are recited at length. In declining to accept the view there taken of heathen worship, I have no desire to call in question the great truth that evil spirits were concerned in instigating and appropriating such worship, and that the Gentiles, therefore, sacrificed δαιμονίοις, καὶ οὐ Θεῷ (1 Cor. x. 20).

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Theory of natural coincidences.

3. It was perhaps in the recoil from theories of this nature, overstrained and made incredible, that other writers have been since propelled into an opposite conclusion. In their eyes, the correspondencies between the heathen and Christian systems, where not purely casual and external, may be almost universally referred to some internal affinity, to principles inherent in the constitution of man, and stimulated by necessities of his moral nature; the grand merit of Christianity, so they think, consisting in the fact, that it has spoken with authority on the character and bearing of those fundamental principles, and taught men how to regulate the course of their development. But while granting, as I do, that such assumptions will account for several of the points in question, there are many other indications of affinity so minute and so specific, that we cannot fairly pass them over with this short and summary explanation. By so acting, the opponent of Christianity incurs the charge of sheltering his objections under words that may hereafter prove no more than empty generalities. In any case it were unreasonable to call for our assent to his hypothesis till further questions have been asked and answered. What is the amount of probability that *some outward channel of communication existed at, or prior to, the birth of Christ, between Hindu philosophers and the doctors of the western world?* And if so, is it further probable, from the character and circumstances of the age, that any interchange or fusion would take place between the various and conflicting doctrines then in course of circulation? These inquiries are, I think, de-

serving of more notice than they have commonly received from modern speculators: for exactly in proportion as the answer is affirmative will natural media be discovered for explaining some of the more close resemblances which I have undertaken to investigate.

External communication,

Now with reference to the former question, it is certain that a lively intercourse subsisted in the earliest age of Christianity between the western marts of Hindustan, and those of Persia and Egypt. Thoughtful minds were also actively employed in tracing the divergencies and points of contact in the different systems of philosophy, and in searching for some common ground on which they all could meet together. This eclectic tendency is manifest on one side in the schools of Alexandria, which, after it absorbed the commerce both of Tyre and Carthage, was the centre and emporium of all forms of philosophic speculation; and on the other side in many schools of India where the publication of a treatise, like the *Bhagavad-Gítá*, bears witness to the ruling wish for peace, for union, for amalgamation. We might, therefore, be prepared to find that in the traffic carried on between the east and west, regard was sometimes had to higher interests than those of merchandise. But further it is argued to the satisfaction[1], not to say delight, of adversaries of the Gospel, that many rampant heresies, by which

evinced by early heresies.

[1] See Von Bohlen, *Das alte Indien*, I. 571 sq. He concurs in many of the views adopted by J. J. Schmidt, in his treatise, *Über die Verwandschaft der gnostisch-theosophischen Lehren mit den Religionen des Orients, vorzüglich dem Buddhaismus*, Leipzig, 1828; and afterwards, in the main, by Neander, *Ch. Hist.* II. 159 sq. Bohn's ed. See also Prof. Wilson's Preface to the *Vishńu Puráńa*, p. viii.

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the primitive Church was torn and weakened, had been generated in attempts to blend the truths of Christianity with notions borrowed from the heathen creeds of Hindustan and Persia. The riddle which the founders of the Gnostic sects were all struggling to interpret had reference to the origin of physical and moral evil[1]; and the various guesses which these sects propounded have betrayed, in almost every case, their eastern origin. If it be doubtful whether Buddhist emissaries, panting for fresh fields of action, penetrated through the towns and villages of Parthia, and even reached the shores of the Mediterranean, there is no lack of evidence enabling us to specify some individual links by which the interchange of articles of faith might be most naturally effected. Bardesanes[2], for example, one of the more brilliant spirits of the latter half of the second century, had himself travelled from Edessa to some part of Hindustan, expressly with the purpose of there studying the religion of the Bráhmans: while Mani[3], who endeavoured to construct a composite religion, of which Christianity was made a leading element, had wandered far and near in quest of knowledge, and contracted in his wanderings an especial fondness for the creed of Gautama, which he studied under the roof of some Buddhist grotto in Turkistan.

[1] *e.g.* Euseb. *Hist. Eccl.* v. 27: τὰ Μαξίμου περὶ τοῦ πολυθρυλλήτου παρὰ τοῖς αἱρεσιώταις ζητήματος, τοῦ πόθεν ἡ κακία, καὶ περὶ τοῦ γενητὴν ὑπάρχειν τὴν ὕλην.

[2] Von Bohlen, as above, p. 372.

[3] Neander, II. 170. This writer guards himself, however, against the construction that he means to explain *all* the parallelisms between true and false religions on the theory of external influences. He accordingly adds (p. 164): 'Analogies of this sort, having a perfectly internal origin, often recur in the historical development of Christianity, wherever *corruptions of purely Christian truth* have sprung up.'

Further proofs of external communication.

If the above considerations make it probable that intercourse did actually exist between the early misbelievers and the speculative minds of Hindustan, I hold myself at liberty to argue, on the other side, that Christian influences might be as readily made to operate through corresponding channels, and assist, to some degree, in modifying the old principles of Hinduism. But the question is not one of plausibilities and bare presumptions. Many circumstances raise it higher in the scale of probability. I shall not insist upon the fact that copies of the Gospels, both in their genuine and corrupted form, obtained a very wide circulation in all regions of the east. I shall not exaggerate the value of the evidence which traces the extant community of 'Christians of St Thomas[1]' to the apostolic age. Eusebius[2] has distinctly mentioned, that when a learned doctor of Alexandria, at the close of the second century, was impelled by missionary zeal as far east as India, he found the seeds of Christianity already scattered, and already bearing fruit. The same diffusion of the Gospel at this early period is attested by the Arian writer, Philostorgius. He informs[3] us of a missionary with the surname Indicus (ὁ Ἰνδός), who, on visiting

Spurious Gospels:

'Christians of St Thomas.'

Mission of Pantænus,

and of Theophilus.

[1] See Hough, *Hist. of Christianity in India*, I. 32 sq. Wiltsch (*Kirchl. Geographie*, I. 18, n. 8) declares himself in favour of the old traditions on this subject: 'Die Annahme, dass der Apostel Thomas in *India Asiatica*, seu *Orientali* die christliche Kirche gegründet habe, est fast allgemein, und wenn je eine Nachricht der Kirchen-Historiker verdient geglaubt zu werden, so ist es diese.'

[2] *Hist. Eccl.* v. 10, where in speaking of Pantænus, he writes: ὡς καὶ κήρυκα τοῦ κατὰ Χριστὸν εὐαγγελίου τοῖς ἐπ' ἀνατολῆς ἔθνεσιν ἀναδειχθῆναι, μέχρι καὶ τῆς Ἰνδῶν στειλάμενον γῆς: cf. Neander, I. 113.

[3] *Hist. Eccl.* III. 4. The native place of Theophilus (c. 5) was Dvípa Sukhatara, the modern Diu Sokotora: Lassen, II. 1101.

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his native land and other parts of the Hindu Peninsula, was not surprised to meet with fellow-Christians, whose peculiar rites attested their antiquity, as well as their comparative isolation from Christendom at large. The date of this testimony is about the year 350, and two centuries later every doubt as to the permanent presence of Christianity is dissipated by accurate reports of an Egyptian writer[1], whose extensive travels gained for him the title 'Indicopleustes.' Among other places where Christian bodies had been organised he mentions Taprobane (Ceylon), Male or Mangalor on the coast of Malabar, and Calliana, which is either our Calcutta, or a settlement near Bombay.

Testimony of Cosmas Indicopleustes.

Permanence of Christianity in north-western India.

And if it be alleged that nearly all this evidence points to southern rather than to northern Hindustan, the answer is that we have frequent traces of Christianity in that quarter also. The prolific missions[2] of the old Chaldæan or 'Nestorian' Church, diffused with marvellous rapidity over regions far beyond the Tigris, had ere long their offshoots in the heart of Bactriana and the northern provinces of India. There a knowledge of the Gospel lingered through the Middle Ages; for as late as 1503[3] we find the Nestorian patriarch ordaining a metropolitan and three bishops for the regulation of the Church of India; while in 1666, owing partly to these influences and partly to the rival missions of the Latin Church, the Christian po-

[1] See Neander's remarks on this account of Cosmas, *Ch. Hist.* III. 165, 166, and Lassen, II. 1101.

[2] A 'Notitia' of the very numerous sees founded by Nestorian influence is given in Assemani, *Bibl. Orient.* III. pt. ii. pp. 705 sq.

[3] Wiltsch, II. 361.

pulation in the north-western provinces was roughly estimated at 25,000 families[1].

Probable allusion to Christianity and its effects in the Mahábhárata.

It is not then so improbable that while India on the one hand stimulated the formation of the early Christian heresies, genuine Christianity may in turn have imported some of its distinctive elements into the speculations of Bráhmanical and Buddhist doctors. One of the most able Hindu scholars of the present day[2] has even found allusion to such modifications in the ancient literature of India, and pointed out particular links of intercourse through which the Christian influence may have been conveyed. His chief authority is a passage of the *Mahábhárata*, allowed on all hands to be one of the last additions[3] made to that gigantic poem; and as such it may have been no earlier than the second century of the Christian era. According to it, three Bráhmans crossed the sea upon a visit to some neighbouring region (Śvétadvípa), whose peculiarities, if the story be divested of poetic adjuncts and embellishments, consisted mainly in the fact that the inhabitants were light-

[1] Sleeman, *Rambles and Recollections*, I. 15, quoting Thevenot, the traveller.

[2] Weber, *Ind. Studien*, I. 400, note. His deductions from the passage in the *Mahábhárata* are as follows: 'Dass Bráhmanen über das Meer nach Alexandrien oder gar Kleinasien gekommen seien zur Zeit der Blüthe des ersten Christenthums, und dass sie, heimgekehrt nach Indien, die monotheistische Lehre und einige Legenden desselben auf den einheimischen, durch seinen Namen an *Christus* den Sohn der *göttlichen* Jungfrau erinnernden, und vielleicht schon vorher göttlich verehrten Weisen oder Heros *Krishńa Dévakíputra* [Sohn der Dévakí "*Göttlichen*"] übergetragen haben, im übrigen die christlichen Lehren durch Sánkhya- und Yoga-Philosophemata ersetzend, wie sie umgekehrt ihrerseits vielleicht auf die Bildung gnostischer Sekten hingewirkt hatten.' Lassen, who controverts some portions of Weber's theory (*Ind. Alterthum.* II. 1096 sq.) believes, notwithstanding, that the people visited by the Bráhmans were really Christians (p. 1099), and conjectures that the interviews took place in Parthia.

[3] Lassen, II. 1096, n. 1.

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complexioned, and also in religion were monotheists (*ékántinas*). During this visit of the Bráhmans they acquired a stock of knowledge which enabled them on their return to introduce improvements into the hereditary creed, and more especially to make the worship of Krishńa (Vásudéva) the most prominent feature of their system. The foreigners from whom they borrowed these ideas are said to have also worshipped the one God without the intervention of images, to have been gifted with superior faith (*bhakti*), to have assigned peculiar efficacy to prayer when offered up in spirit, and to have confidently hoped that their specific doctrines would ere long attract to them a larger circle of adherents. Without entering on the controversies touching the precise date or the locality of this interview, or claiming any knowledge of the more immediate effects which it produced on one party or the other, I am surely justified in drawing from it the conclusion that as intercourse may thus be shewn to have subsisted between the Christian and the Bráhman, it is not impossible that some ideas and traditions of the latter were subjected to the transforming influences of Christianity.

Placing, therefore, all these facts and inferences before the reader to guide him in his judgment of what follows, I shall now proceed to the investigation of particular points in which the two religions have been thought to touch, if not entirely coincide. These have reference to—

1. Hindu monotheism.

2. Hindu triads, or trinities.

3. Hindu *avatáras*, or incarnations, especially that of Krishńa.

§ 1. *Hindu monotheism.*

Exaggerations of sceptical writers on this subject.

The observation is now current that whatever else the old inhabitants of India may have gradually forgotten or distorted, their idea of God has always been the same, and always far superior to conceptions that prevailed in other parts of heathendom. 'The Gospels themselves,' wrote Belsham, 'teach not a purer monotheism than do the sacred writings of the Hindoos[1].' Voltaire, in his endeavours to destroy the supernatural character of Christianity by pointing out its close resemblance to other systems, had paraded the same boast in many of his writings; but when he sought to justify his language by appealing to the *Ezour-Veidam*[2], which he took an active part in rescuing from oblivion, he betrayed at once the weakness of his cause and his own blind credulity. The production was in fact no genuine monument of ancient India; it was the fabrication of a Jesuit missionary, who had put it forth in order to facilitate the conversion of the more learned class of Hindus by shewing that some truths of Christianity were not unknown to their forefathers. This fact alone should have suggested to mythologists that belief in one Supreme Being was less prominently stated in the genuine Védas than the 'patriarch of infidelity' was willing to suppose. And if we turn from vague assertions or disjointed extracts, and

[1] Quoted in W. J. Fox's *Religious Ideas*, p. 11.

[2] See the account in Saint-Hilaire, *Des Védas*, pp. 15 sq., and Adelung's *Sketch of Sanscrit Literature*, pp. 75, 76, Oxf. 1832. Voltaire imagined that the work was composed before the date of Alexander's expedition: but the real author, it is said, was Roberto de' Nobili, a nephew of Bellarmine, who went on a mission to India about 1640.

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examine the documents themselves, it is quite obvious (1) that current statements on the purity and sublimity of early Hindu worship are very much exaggerated, and (2) that where traces of monotheism exist at all, they indicate a tenet far inferior to the lofty theism of Christianity.

My own belief is that no absolutely true idea can be obtained with reference to these subjects till a deeper study of Hindu literature shall have enabled us to discriminate more accurately between the lyric and dogmatic portions of the Védas, *i.e.* between those portions which are manifestly ancient, but in which there is a general absence of the metaphysical element, and those of later growth in which that element is active, and preponderates. It is also most desirable to separate as far as may be the præ-Christian treatises from those which are allowedly post-Christian; since suspicions are fast gaining ground[1] that even the Bráhmanical ideas of God were somewhat modified and exalted by intercourse with Christianity.

Rarity of allusions to one God.

If we lay aside expressions in the Vaidic hymns which have occasionally transferred the attributes of power and omnipresence to some one elemental deity, as Indra for example, and by so doing inti-

[1] See above, p. 52, n. 1. Weber also has pronounced distinctly in favour of this view: 'Wenn ich nun schon oben, p. 400, aus einer bestimmten Sage des MBh. speciell die Verehrung Krishńa's als Eingottes, als durch das Bekanntwerden der Bráhmańa mit dem Christenthum veranlasst gemuthmasst habe, so kann ich nicht umhin hier es auch weiter als meine Vermuthung auszusprechen, dass überhaupt die spätere exclusiv monotheistische Richtung der indischen Sekten, welche *einen bestimmten persönlichen Gott* verehren, um seine Gnade flehen und an ihn glauben (*bhakti* und *çraddhá*) eben durch das Bekanntwerden der Inder mit den entsprechenden Lehren des Christenthums influenzirt worden ist:' *Ind. Stud.* I. 423, and, as reiterated, II. 169.

mated that even in the depths of nature-worship intuitions pointing to one great and all-embracing Spirit could not be extinguished, there are scarcely a dozen 'mantras' in the whole collection where the unity of God is stated with an adequate amount of firmness and consistency. The great mass of those productions either invoke the aid, or deprecate the wrath, of multitudinous deities, who elsewhere are regarded as no more than finite emanations from the 'Lord of the creatures[1]' (*Prajápati*); and therefore in the sacred books themselves polytheism was the feature ever prominent, and, what is more remarkable, was never openly repudiated. In other words, where a belief in the supremacy of God is manifest at all, it looks as though it were unable to assert itself in practice, owing to the uncongenial atmosphere by which it was surrounded. Still, we must allow, that of those hymns in which monotheism is predominant, some exhibit true conceptions of the power, the spirituality, and the unrivalled majesty of God. The following is a specimen; it is taken from the last division of the Rig-Véda, and entitled by a commentator, the Supreme Spirit[2] (*Paramátmá*):—

One of the best specimens.

"Nothing then existed, neither being (*sat*), nor non-being (*asat*); no world, no air, no firmament. Where was then the

[1] Thus in the remarkable hymn entitled 'Au Dieu Créateur' (*Rig-Véda*, ed. Langlois, IV. 409, 410) the last clause runs as follows: 'O Pradgâpati, ce n'est point un autre que toi qui a donné naissance à tous ces êtres. Accorde-nous les biens pour lesquels nous t'offrons le sacrifice. Puissions-nous être les maîtres de la richèsse!' And just before the supremacy of One God is distinctly recognized: 'Parmi les dieux il est le Dieu incomparable. A quel (autre) dieu offririons-nous l'holocauste?'

[2] Langlois, IV. 421. I have followed his translation in the main, comparing it with Colebrooke's (*Asiat. Researches*, VIII. 404) and Saint-Hilaire's (*Des Védas*, p. 60).

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covering of the universe? where the receptacle of the water? where the impenetrable depths of air? Death was not, nor immortality, nor anything that marked the boundaries of day and night. But THAT (*Tad*) breathed in solitude without afflation, absorbed in His own thought (*swadhá*). Besides THAT naught existed. The darkness was at first enveloped in darkness; the water was devoid of movement; and everything was gathered up and blended together in THAT. The Being reposed on the bosom of this void; and the universe was at last produced by the strength of His devotion (*tapas*). In the beginning desire (*káma*) was formed in His spirit (*manas*): and this was the first productive principle. It is thus that the wise men, pondering in their heart, have explained the union of being and non-being.

"But who can know such things exactly? Or who can declare them? These beings, whence come they? This creation, whence did it originate? The *dévas* were themselves created or produced. But THAT, who knows His nature and His origin? Who can tell how all this varied world has issued into being? Can it, or can it not, support itself? He who, from the heights of heaven, is gazing on the universe, He alone can tell whether it exists, or only seems to exist."

Nature of Hindu monotheism.

It is obvious from the character of this exalted hymn and the position which it occupies in the Rig-Véda, that it was the product of an age in which the speculations of India were assuming the peculiar forms presented to our view in the Bráhmanic period. And, we saw already, a belief in the common origin of the phenomenal universe was, in this second stage of the Hindu religion, lying at the root of all men's theorisings. Unity became the central, though it might be esoteric[1],

[1] It is remarkable that this *doctrina arcani*, on which Cudworth and others have insisted as a fundamental characteristic of ancient systems of philosophy, was recognised as late as the sixteenth century. In one of Xavier's conversations with a Bráhman, he was told *confidentially* that the learned Hindus all believed in the unity of God; and further, that it was revealed in their ancient writings, 'que toutes les fausses religions cesseroient un jour, et qu'un temps viendroit où tout le monde

doctrine of the 'orthodox' philosopher. Every thing that is, and every thing that seems to be, comes forth originally from God, who is the primal source of being, and eventually is gathered up afresh in Him, the all-pervading Soul or Spirit. The *dévas*, worshipped by the undiscerning multitude, are held to be no more than scintillations of His majesty: they emanate from Him, who, when the worlds were brought into existence, had proceeded to create the 'guardians of the worlds.' Hence God is, ultimately, every thing, and every thing is God. He 'is Brahmá; he is Indra; he is Prajápati: these gods are he, and so are the five primary elements, earth, air, the etherial fluid, water, and light[1].'

The attributes and operations of this one great Spirit are nowhere brought before us with such fervour and sublimity, as in the *Íśa-Upanishad*, a kind of pendant to the second Véda: for not only is He there exhibited as the All-glorious and Supreme, but also as the proper object of man's worship, the restorer of the fallen spirit, and the author of eternal happiness. The following passage[2] will give the reader a just idea of the whole:

"One sovereign ruler pervades this world of worlds. Nurture thyself with that single thought, abandoning all others, and covet not the joys of any creature. He who in this life performs his religious duties may desire to live a hundred

garderoit une même loi:' Bouhours, *Vie de S. François Xavier*, pp. 95, 96, Louvain, 1822.

[1] See Colebrooke's translation from the *Aitaréya A'raṅya*, in *Asiat. Res.* VIII. 421, 422.

[2] It is translated with the title *Íśávásyam*, in Sir W. Jones's *Works*, VI. 423 sq. 4to ed., by Rammohun Roy, *Translation of several principal books, &c. of the Veds*, pp. 101 sq. Lond. 1832; and still more exactly from a somewhat different text, by Saint-Hilaire, *Des Védas*, pp. 86 sq.

years; but even to the end thou shouldest have no other occupation. It is to regions, left a prey for evil spirits and covered with eternal darkness, that those men go after death, who have corrupted their own soul. This one single Spirit, which nothing can disturb, is swifter than the thought of man. This primal Mover the *dêvas* even cannot overtake. Unmoved itself, it infinitely transcends all others, however rapid be their course. It moves the universe at its pleasure: it is distant from us, and yet very near to all things: it pervades this entire universe, and yet is infinitely beyond it. The man who has learned to recognise all beings in this supreme Spirit and this supreme Spirit in all beings, can henceforth look upon no creature with contempt. The man who understands that all beings only exist in this single being; the man who is made conscious of such profound identity, what trouble or what pain can touch him? He then arrives at Brahma himself: he is luminous, apart from body, apart from evil, apart from matter, pure, and rescued from all taint: he knows, he foreknows, he rules every thing: he sees only by himself alone, and things appear to him such as they were from all eternity, always like themselves.... Let the wind, the breath immortal, carry off this body of mine, which is mere ashes; but, O Brahma, remember my intentions, remember my efforts, remember my deeds. O Agni (spirit of fire), conduct us by sure pathways to eternal happiness. O God, who knowest all beings, purify us from every sin, and we shall be enabled to consecrate to thee our holiest adorations. My mouth is seeking truth only in this golden cup. It is I, O Brahma! I who adore thee under the form of the resplendent sun. O Sun eternal, hearken to my prayer."

The striking similarity in tone and sentiment between this prayer and the more lofty passages[1] of the *Bhagavad-Gítá* has not unnaturally induced a modern writer to assign their composition to the same period of Hindu literature; and at the same time hinted that, as the date of the latter was subsequent to the diffusion of Christianity, the former may be possibly indebted for some of its more

[1] See a specimen above, p. 74, n. 3.

ethical properties to the superior light of revelation. But, however all such points may be eventually decided, it is certain that no higher specimen of heathen worship has been hitherto found in the surviving monuments of Bráhmanism. 'One is tempted to ask,' writes[1] a learned translator of it, 'whether the Himálaya or Mount Sinai was the first to listen to these sacred verses.' But he adds immediately afterwards: 'That grand idea of the unity of God was lost in India, instead of being developed: it was swallowed up in pantheism; and these precious germs have therefore perished under a mass of most deplorable superstitions.'

Practical polytheism.

Here indeed is one of the peculiarities to which I would direct the special notice of the reader. The Hindus have been, from first to last, a tribe of creature-worshippers, a nation of polytheists. Belief in one supreme Intelligence, so far from elevating the character of their institutions and obtaining an exclusive utterance in their sacred poetry, has been an heirloom only of the favoured few. It was so, in the Vaidic period, when the young imagination of the A'ryan, intoxicated by the beauties of external nature and led astray from God, sought refuge in the deification of the elements. It was so, when his descendants had been taught to clothe the genii of that earlier period with the attributes of human heroes and of god-like sages. It is so at present, when a Hindu writer has been heard deploring the incurable idolatry of his countrymen, and affirming that 'the allegorical adoration of the true Deity[2],' which anti-Christian scholars

[1] Saint-Hilaire, p. 89.

[2] In the 'Introduction' to his *Translation,* &c., Rammohun Roy declares that the Hindus of the pre-

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had professed to recognise in the existing forms of worship, is totally unknown among themselves.

Defect in the Hindu idea of God.

But I shall go yet further. Passing by the question as to whether any changes were, in this particular, effected through the agency of the Gospel and Korán, I feel justified in asserting that the best conceptions formed of the supreme Being, in the highest systems of Hindu philosophy, are all imperfect and onesided: they fall short of those which have impressed themselves on almost every chapter in the records of the true religion.

God in His relation to matter.

1. The Jehovah of the Hebrews and the God of Christians is so purely spiritual and so entirely supramundane, that His worshippers could never run the risk of identifying their Divinity either with the forms of matter, or with powers and processes of the material universe. He is in essence totally distinct from each and all of these. The world of matter is objective to Him, and so far from thwarting His divine omnipotence, it is one single product of His legislative will, an instrument, a vassal. On the other hand, the Brahma of Hindustan is evermore confounded with the vital properties of nature, or is only made coordinate and coequal with them. Creation itself is there preceded by a something[1], that restrains and fetters the sovereignty of the Creator; or else, as in the Sánkhya system, where it was attempted to establish a peculiar principle of causality by extruding

sent day 'have no such views of the subject, but firmly believe in the real existence of innumerable gods and goddesses, who possess, in their own departments, full and independent power; and to propitiate them, and not the true God, are temples erected and ceremonies performed:' p. 5; cf. above, p. 35.

[1] See Prof. Wilson's *Lectures*, p. 53.

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the revealed idea of God, creation is no more than the spontaneous evolution of a primary essence, irrespectively of any conscious and designing Agent. God, in other words, is not supreme according to the doctrine of Hindu philosophers. Some of them indeed allow us to regard Him as the ever-present basis and the sole substratum of the universe, the life and starting-point of all its varied operations: but in no case do the energies inherent in His being enable Him to rise superior to mysterious laws which regulate the course of nature. Even where the Sánkhyas had, in later times, so modified[1] their tenets that volition was ascribed to the Almighty and His moral attributes more fully recognised, this virtual limitation of His freedom, this entrenchment on His absolute supremacy, continues to be visible.

How far impersonal.

And since Hindus were rarely able to conceive of God as altogether separable from the world of phenomena without plunging into utter atheism, so their noblest thoughts of Him are in the same proportion leavened and debased by pantheistic elements, of which the logical issue is denial of His proper personality. 'This whole,' it had been taught in schools of 'orthodox' philosophy, 'this whole is Brahma, from Brahmá to a clod of earth. Brahma is both the efficient and the material cause of the world. He is the potter by whom the fictile vase is formed: He is the clay of which it is fabricated[2].' Nor, as other phases in the history of

[1] Above, p. 52.

[2] Wilson, *Ibid.* p. 49; and above, p. 32; although, as Prof. Wilson justly remarks, the full extent of these materialistic illustrations may not have been intended. Rammohun Roy, as before, p. 12, explains the phrase 'All that exists is indeed

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Bráhmanism present themselves for our investigation, are evils of this kind corrected and removed. The system in which the freedom of God appeared to be entirely compromised was followed by a subtler form of pantheism, which contended that whatever *is* resulted from the internal necessities of the Divine nature; so that the idea of God, as known to Christendom, instead of gaining clearness with the growth of metaphysical acumen, had remained as evanescent and impersonal as before. Men argued that all essences, which underlie the various grades of being and impart to the material world whatever of reality it may possess, originate in one great Spirit, who is subjected to periodic resolution and is periodically reabsorbed in simple unity. Creation, therefore, must be construed still more nakedly as another name for emanation. God Himself is one, because the universe is one mighty organism, and all the forms of animated nature, being consubstantial with divinity, or containing in themselves a particle of the all-pervading Spirit, are thereby shielded from the violence of man, or made the fitting objects of his worship. Such is even the theology of portions of the *Ís'a-Upanishad,* from which an extract has been given above: and such is also one main tenet of the *Bhagavad-Gítá,* where, in the midst of efforts to establish the universality of God, the language put into the mouth of the divine interlocutor breathes the sternest kind of pantheism, and pursues the principle of absolute

God' as equivalent to 'Nothing bears true existence excepting God'; and the phrase 'Whatever we smell or taste is the Supreme Being' as equivalent to 'The existence of whatever thing appears to us relies on the existence of God.' But surely this refinement is excessive.

necessity to its furthest and most fearful consequences.

God no real object of trust and worship.

2. But granting that relations between God and matter are not always so far misinterpreted; granting that some higher thoughts than such as we have just reviewed were struggling here and there for utterance through the pantheistic terminology of Bráhmanism; granting that the unity of which it speaks is something more than Nature[1], as traced backwards to its primary germ and basis by a generalising process of the intellect, or Nature, as idealised and deified by the poetic faculty of the worshipper: granting, also, that the current dogmas, with regard to the great Spirit of the universe, are sometimes capable of interpretations which do not of necessity exclude the thought of His self-consciousness and independent personality, how poor are, notwithstanding, the most elevated of Hindu conceptions as compared with that which has, in every age, been printed on the heart of Christians and of Hebrews! There the Author of the universe, as represented by philosophy, is so unknown, so abstract, so incapable of definition, so devoid of everything that constitutes a bond of sympathy with created beings, as to exercise no power on the direction of the human will or the formation of the human character. No man is able to hold converse with the Absolute; no

[1] Yet Wuttke (II. 262) is indisposed to grant more than this: 'Das Brahma,' he writes, 'ist nichts als die auf ihre Einheit zurückgeführte Natur, das Natur-Eins, die einheitliche Grundlage aller natürlichen Dinge, ist nicht mehr und nicht weniger.' When Christianity, as he contends, was brought into communication with Hinduism, the resulting idea of God was a mixture of 'Christian monotheism' and 'Hindu naturalism.'

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déva can describe the being or mark out the path of the Ineffable. The thought of Him inspires not confidence and hope, but awe, distrust, and apprehension. He has no *paternal* character[1]. The world and the affairs of men may all indeed be subject to fixed laws which had their origin in Him, but no account is taken by this doctrine of the providence by which He regulates the course of individuals and the destinies of nations. Much less are men regarded as the objects of His love and pity, as the wanderers He would fain recover from their blind infatuation, as the prodigals whom He is ever yearning to reclaim and elevate, to pardon and renew. Belief in the Supreme God is therefore with such persons barely *speculative:* it does not warm the heart; it does not quicken the religious sentiment; it does not foster gratitude; it is not perfected by love. The Brahma of the Hindu schoolman still continues a great *It*, a vast but cold abstraction, shewing little or no interest in the world and in the fortunes of his human progeny, or at the best receding far beyond the cognizance of ordinary spirits. Hence it has resulted that the great majority of Hindus have always, during the historic period, substituted for the one true God, a host of demi-gods and other parasitical divinities, like those which crowd their pantheon at the present day. Each group they have invested with some one or other of the attributes of God, and made supreme in some one pro-

[1] See Creuzer's *Symbolik*, I. 171, 172, Leipzig, 1836, on the difference between the Christian and heathen use of the word 'Father' as applied to God. 'Wenn der Christ seinen Gott *Vater* nennt so ist es ungetheiltes Vertrauen, was ihm dieses Wort eingiebt. Der Christ *kennt* seinen Gott.'

vince of creation. These are held to exercise on man the personal government which seemed unworthy of the abstract Brahma, or entirely foreign to His nature. These, it is maintained, are still accessible to mortals; these can listen to the prayer and quaff the grateful sacrifice: these punish or reward according to the quality of actions; and whatever therefore of religious sentiment is now evoked in the great mass of Hindu worshippers, is not so much the issue of half-conscious gropings after the Unknown God, whose image is not utterly obliterated from the human spirit, as a tribute consciously and freely paid to those who are 'no gods.'

Source of this debased theology.

Before passing to another division of the subject, I cannot help remarking how completely the internal character of the doctrines here compared unites itself with different kinds of evidence in shewing that if Bráhmanism and Christianity have borrowed from each other, the obligation is upon the side of India, not of Palestine: for while many traits of the scriptural idea of God can never be explained by reference to Bráhmanic speculations, nothing pure or noble is distinguishable in the latter, which might not have been derived from more explicit statements of the former. I incline, however, to the intermediate view already urged by St Augustine in his controversy with the Manichæans of his day: 'Be it known,' he writes, 'to Faustus, or those rather who are charmed by his productions, that our doctrine of divine Monarchy is not borrowed from the heathen, but that, on the other hand, the heathen themselves had not so wholly lapsed into the worship of false gods as to

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relinquish all belief in the one True God, from whom is every order of created being[1].'

§ 2. *Hindu trinities, or triads.*

Real nature of the Bráhmanical triad.

It is difficult to understand how any one, whose judgment was not clouded by some theory of his own respecting the extent of the primeval revelation, or who on the other hand was not desirous at all hazards to impair the sacred character of Christianity, could ever have adduced the Hindu triad as the parallel of that transcendent mystery which forms the basis of the Catholic faith. Sir William Jones, who commonly shewed himself as eager as the rest of his contemporaries to detect the slightest shadows of affinity between the Bible and the sacred books of India, was in this case strenuous in denying the reality of the alleged resemblances[2]. And fresh investigations have completely justified the verdict of that eminent critic. The *trimúrrti* of India, which eventually is represented under the symbol of a body with three heads, has no foundation in the Védas[3], nor have

[1] *Contra Faustum,* lib. xx. c. 19: *Opp.* VIII. 245, ed. Bened.

[2] *Asiatic Researches,* I. 273. He complained that missionaries, in their zeal for the conversion of the natives, had been foolish enough to urge that 'the Hindus were even now almost Christians, because their Brahmá, Vishńu and Mahésa [Śiva] were no other than the Christian Trinity.' One of these missionaries was the Jesuit Bouchet, who in the words of Chateaubriand (*Génie du Christianisme,* v. 10) sent home a number of most curious details 'sur le rapport des fables Indiennes avec les principales vérités de nôtre religion, et les traditions de l'écriture.' On the contrary, a learned Jewish writer, Philippsohn, *Development of the Religious Idea,* p. 156, has pointed out that the 'trinitarian Godhead of Christianity' differs from all other triads in being 'exclusively and wholly good; whereas in heathenism one of the three divine powers was conceived to be opposed to the other two, the principle of evil.'

[3] See above, p. 24, n. 1.

any traces of it been discovered in the Laws of Manu. It was clearly the production of a later age,—an age when thoughtful persons, anxious to regain their hold on the idea of unity, began to study all the various processes of physical life, and to reduce them into three kinds or phases, generation, preservation, and destruction[1]. Each of these was deemed the efflux of a special energy, and Brahmá, Vishńu, and Śiva were selected as the verbal representatives of natural causes contemplated in their three-fold character. So long as the idea of God as one, supreme, and personal was consciously preserved, those titles would not necessarily issue in impiety. Men felt that Brahma, the Ineffable, whose proper dwelling is in gloom and silence, had notwithstanding made a revelation of Himself in nature, and that under three ideal forms expressing His distinctive operations in that province, men were able to conceive of Him and pay Him adoration.

How it excluded the truth of the Divine unity;

But however this may be, it is quite certain that ere long the physical attributes of God, as the Creator, the Preserver, the Destroyer, were so rigorously personified, that they not only superseded the more elemental of the Vaidic deities, but practically excluded from men's thoughts the personality of God Himself. Brahmá, for instance, who in theory constituted the first link of some grand chain of emanations, was eventually saluted[2] as the 'great creator,' the 'father of the universe,' the 'founder and the governor of all things:' while other epithets, no less exalted and as plainly inconsistent with belief in unity, were gradually transferred by

[1] Above, pp. 34, 35.

[2] Wuttke, II. 269 sq.

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similar processes to Śiva and Vishńu. These three together represented everything that was divine; all other objects in the pantheon were reducible to these, and were held to be new phases of the three superior gods. 'The deities are only three,' says a high authority[1] of Bráhmanism, 'whose places are the earth, the intermediate region, and heaven; *viz.* fire, air, and the sun. They are pronounced to be [the deities] of the mysterious names severally; and *Prajápati,* the Lord of the creatures, is [the deity] of them collectively. The syllable *Om* intends every deity. It belongs to *Paraméshthí,* him, who dwells in the supreme abode; it appertains to *Brahma,* the vast one; to *Déva,* God; to *A'dhyátmá,* the superintending soul. Other deities belonging to these several regions are portions of the [three] Gods; for they are variously named and described, on account of their different operations: but [in fact] there is only one Deity, the Great Soul (*Mahán-A'tmá*).' This passage, interesting on other accounts, will more especially enable us to realize the thought which underlies all seeming inconsistencies in statements of different Hindu writers respecting the essential character of the members of their sacred triad. Brahmá, Vishńu, and Śiva are deemed worthy of the highest honour, and in act have been so worshipped, because they gather up and place before the worshipper everything that he can possibly know of God; yet all the while they are, as to their essence, creatures[2] separable from Brahma,

and substituted the worship of created beings.

[1] Quoted by Colebrooke in *Asiat. Res.* VIII. 395 sq.

[2] The following passage is very explicit: 'You are not to consider Vishńu, Brahmá and Mahádéva (Śiva), and other incorporate beings

differing in degree but not in nature from the members of the human species, and all destined to eventual reabsorption like other finite beings. Hence also, as the consequence of this conception, each of them is represented in the ancient books of India accompanied by a wife (*śakti*), who forms the counterpart of his own energies[1]; Saraswatí reflecting the peculiar powers of Brahmá, Lakshmí of Vishńu, and Parvatí of Śiva.

Christian doctrine of the Trinity in Unity.

It were needless to point out in detail how this Hindu triad differs from the Catholic doctrine of the Holy Trinity,—that, I mean, for which the primitive Church had never ceased to struggle with the utmost jealousy[2] when assaulted by a host of pagan theories on the right hand and the left. The opposition between such doctrines is entire and fundamental. The germ of the Christian Trinity is not discoverable in any or in all the processes of physical nature. The actual development of the idea is neither tritheistic nor Sabellian. Christians have indeed been ever constant in maintaining the grand principle of the divine Monarchy. They believe in one only True God, one starting-point, one Head, one ἀρχή, one original, supreme and indivisible

as the Deity, although they have each of them the denomination of Déva, or divine. They are all created; while the Supreme Being is without beginning or end, unformed, and uncreated; worship and adore Him.' The writer then explains that worship is paid to inferior deities in order that men's 'minds may be composed, and conducted, by degrees, to the essential Unity.' Quoted in Lord Teignmouth's *Life of Sir Wm. Jones*, II. 284, 8vo. ed.

[1] See Stuhr, I. 100, Wuttke, II. 270: and cf. above, p. 9, n. 3.

[2] Thus St Athanasius, *Contra Arianos* Oratio II. (Opp. I. 325, Colon. 1686) protests with his wonted vehemence against the tendency of the pagan mind to represent the Persons of the Holy Trinity as created intelligences: 'Ἀλλ' οὐκ ἂν ἀνάσχοιτό τις Χριστιανῶν τῶν τοιούτων αἱρετικῶν· Ἑλλήνων γὰρ ἴδια ταῦτα, ὥστε γενητὴν εἰσάγειν Τριάδα, καὶ τοῖς γενητοῖς αὐτὴν συνεξισάζειν, κ.τ.λ.

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Essence. They believe, accordingly, that while the Godhead of the Father is entirely independent, and of none, the Godhead of the Second Person in the blessed Trinity is derived,—derived from all eternity, by the communication to Him of the Godhead of the Father: and a similar remark is applicable to the mode in which the Third Person has eternally coexisted in that infinite Being. They believe, in other words, that the Divine essence, though incapable of multiplication, was not absolutely sterile, yea rather, that in virtue of its communicability, those three transcendent and profound relations have arisen which justify the titles Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

On the other hand, all Catholic Christians have maintained with equal firmness that as each of the Three Personalities is properly Divine, so each must be regarded as the subject of attributes, as one distinct and personal Agent. The Word of God, for instance, is no simple quality, constituting one person with the Father; as a man together with his faculties is said to form one human subject. Neither is the Son of God a deified intelligence, exalted far above the level of his fellows, and entrusted with the joint administration of the universe. However much these views of Christ and of His Person may be advocated here and there by the professing Christian, they differ *toto cœlo* from the principles inherited by early saints and martyrs; for otherwise the opposition offered to the Gospel by the pagan scoffer and half-pagan heretic would be utterly inexplicable.

Sánkhya triad.

No greater resemblance will again be found between the Christian Trinity and some ideal com-

binations which arise from time to time in systems of Hindu philosophy. One of these appears to have been prompted by a wish of later Sánkhyas to get rid of the Bráhmanical triad, and replace it by a something more in harmony with their own peculiar speculations. They accordingly affirmed[1] that *buddhi,* or intelligence, the second in order of their 'principles,' became distinctly known as three gods, by the agency of the three 'qualities;' and was thus to be esteemed 'one person' (*múrrti*) distributed in 'three *dévas,*' or, in other words, Brahmá, Vishńu, and Siva.

Buddhist triad.

Buddhism, in like manner, had in later times put forth its own peculiar triad. Intelligence, the first principle, was in the monasteries of Nepál associated with Dharma, the principle of matter; while a mediating power, or Sanga, was combined with the two others in order to secure their union and harmonious co-operation. But this latter class of triads will more fitly come before us, on proceeding to examine[2] what is called the 'Platonic trinity,' a doctrine which has often since the days of Plotinus been put forward as subversive of the loftier claims of Christianity.

[1] Colebrooke, *Essais,* ed. Pauthier, pp. 17, 18.

[2] In the meantime I refer the reader to C. Morgan's able *Investigation of the Trinity of Plato, &c.* who, in treating of the Catholic doctrine of the Holy Trinity, remarks (pp. 154, 155, Camb. 1853): 'But the cultivators of human wisdom appear to have been total strangers to it, till it was disclosed to them by a teacher of philosophy, [Plotinus], who had been educated in the bosom of Christianity. Then, and not till then, they used it as a key to unlock the abstract subtilties of Plato, and to throw a decent veil over the extravagant and licentious fables of Pagan mythology.'

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§ 3. *Hindu* avatáras, *or incarnations, especially that of Krishńa.*

Origin of Hindu avatáras.

A remark which I have made already in allusion to the Hindu triads may as safely be extended to the Hindu theory of incarnations. That theory again has no existence either in the Védas[1], or the Laws of Manu[2]. It is, therefore, a development, or rather I should say, an aftergrowth, of which no trace appears until we reach a later stage in the religious history of Hindustan. There was, however, a clear tendency in the direction of this dogma, when philosophers had once begun to realize the principle of emanation; for if all created beings had within them particles of Divinity, it was easy to believe that heroes, whether physical or moral, had been gifted with so large a share of the divine, that God might, without impropriety, be said to dwell in them, to speak in them, to use them as material instruments whereby His purposes were carried out.

Their general forms and characteristics.

The name of *avatára*, or descent, has been, however, for the most part limited to certain manifestations of Vishńu, the second member of the mythological triad, who is made to vindicate his character as god and guardian of humanity, or as a middle-term between the powers of generation and destruction, by stepping down from his celestial dwelling-place for the deliverance of the earth at large, or for the special benefit of his worshippers. The *avatáras* of this class are ten in number. First of all Vishńu is represented as inhabiting the

[1] Above, p. 25, n. 2.

[2] Vishńu is only once noticed in this ancient code (Bk. XII. §121), and then as a divinity of inferior rank.

shape of an enormous fish, by which a remnant of the human family was rescued from a general deluge; secondly, as incarnate in a tortoise, by whose help the *dévas* were enabled to manufacture for themselves a new elixir, or ambrosia, which imparted immortality; thirdly, in a boar, which, when the earth was carried by a demon to the bottom of the sea, dived down and rescued it; and then advancing, in the fourth place, to the highest order of animal life, and clothing himself with attributes more terrible and avenging, he appears as Narasingha, the 'Man-Lion.' The fifth incarnation, that of Vámana, the Dwarf, exhibits him rather in the light of a diplomatist, who had recovered for the *dévas* the possession of the 'three worlds' when they were conquered by the demon Bali.

We shall see hereafter that the earliest of these legends was not destitute of all historic basis, and others, as the second, third, and fourth, and possibly the fifth, are equally susceptible of such an explanation. The tenth, or Kalki *avatára*[1], is believed to be still future, pointing to some fearful crisis, when Vishńu, in human form, and seated on a 'white horse,' shall give the signal for extinguishing this visible universe. The four remaining *avatáras* (the sixth, seventh, eighth, and ninth) are all so far historical, that a real basis for them is discoverable in the annals of the A'ryan conflicts, either with the savage aborigines of the Peninsula, or with other foes of the Bráhmanical religion[2].

[1] Cf. Rev. vi. 8, which intimates the Christian origin of this legend. It will be considered again in Chap. III.

[2] For instance, the startling phenomena of Buddhism were finally explained by some of its Bráhmanical opponents on the supposition

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Vishńu, in every case, is thought to be incarnate in the person of some sage or hero; he struggles with malignant spirits, whether men or demons, and having rescued his own followers from their grasp, recedes again into the sphere of absolute divinity.

Particular examination of Krishńa-ism.

But one of these remarkable incarnations, that of Krishńa, or the eighth of the foregoing series, will demand a fuller investigation, not only as the leading member of a group, but also as peculiar in its characteristics[1], and presenting many obvious points of similarity to incidents recorded in our Gospels.

In the earlier *avatáras,* Vishńu is said to have emitted only a portion (*ańśa*) of his godhead, and so to have established an imperfect relation with the forms of animal and human life; but Krishńa, on the contrary, reflected the most glorious image of the god of preservation. The god himself was actually incarnate; he descended as a real man upon the theatre of humanity, while claiming for himself the attributes of the Supreme Being, with whom he is identified. The first example of this great conception meets us in the pages of the *Bhagavad-Gítá,* in which the poet makes him speak as

that Gautama Buddha was an illusory form emitted from the substance of Vishńu (the *ninth* in the series), and that his mission really was to deceive and so destroy the Daityas, or lower classes, who from their ascetic habits had grown too powerful: see *Vishńu Pur.* ed. Wilson, pp. 336 sq.

[1] Krishńa-worship, according to M. Pavie, *Bhagavat Dasam Askand,* Pref. p. xi. (Paris, 1852) is 'le plus moderne de tous les systemès philosophiques et religieux qui ont partagé l'Inde en sectes rivales. Basé sur la théorie des incarnations successives que n' admettaient ni le Véda, ni les législateurs de la première époque brahmanique, le krichnaïsme *diffère sur tant de points* des croyances particulières à l' Inde, qu'on a été tenté de le considérer comme un emprunt fait aux philosophies et aux religions étrangères.'

follows[1]: 'Even though I am unborn, of changeless essence, and the lord also of all which exist, yet, in presiding over nature (*prakriti*), which is mine, I am born by my own mystic power (*máyá*). For whenever there is a relaxation of duty, O son of Bharata! and an increase of impiety, I then reproduce myself for the protection of the good, and the destruction of evil-doers. I am produced in every age for the purpose of establishing duty.' But although the name of Krishńa and the groundwork of his legend were thus fully apprehended at an early period, it was only in the course of ages that Krishńäism was able to embody itself into a sect[2], and only after further intervals that the legend was invested with the fulness and luxuriance, which it manifests in the Puráńas[3],—documents belonging to what is termed the 'renaissance of Bráhmanism,' *i. e.* a period not earlier than the eighth, nor later than the twelfth century of the Christian era.

[1] Chap. IV. (p. 30, ed. Thomson). Elsewhere Krishńa is represented as the Lord of the world, the Creator, the 'Lord of Brahmá, Vishńu and Śiva:' Wuttke, II. 339.

[2] Elphinstone, *Hist. of India*, p. 102, 3rd ed. places the formation of all the sects, which are founded on the worship of particular incarnations, later than the beginning of the 8th century of the Christian era: and Colebrooke (*As. Res.* VIII. 495) believes that the 'worship of Rama and of Crishna by the Vaishnavas, and that of Mahadeva and Bhavani by the Saivas and Sactas, have been generally introduced since the persecution of the Bauddhas and Jainas.' Lassen, in like manner (*Ind. Alt.* II. 446) considers that prominence was given to Krishńa-worship in the hope of counterbalancing the influence of Buddhism at the time when it was threatening to become universal in the Peninsula.

[3] See the *Vishńu Puráńa* as edited by Prof. Wilson, and the *Bhágavat-Pourána*, as edited by M. Burnouf. As all this class of writings are thoroughly *sectarian* in their character, they must have originated after the growth of the rival sects into which Bráhmanism was at length divided; and the general opinion now is that no Puráńa, *as it now exists*, can claim the high antiquity which was formerly assigned to it (Lassen, I. 479 sq.)

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The Krishńa-legend.

I subjoin an abstract of the legend[1] as derived from these sources by a recent hand with no unfriendly or polemical object:

"The king of the Daityas or aborigines, A'huka, had two sons, Devaka and Ugrasena. The former had a daughter named Devakí, the latter a son called Kansa. Devakí (*the divine*) was married to a nobleman of the A'ryan race named Vasudeva (or Anakadundubhi), the son of Śúra, a descendant of Yadu, and by him had eight sons. Vasudeva had also another wife named Rohiní. Kansa, the cousin of Devakí, was informed by the saint and prophet Nárada, that his cousin would bear a son, who would kill him and overthrow his kingdom. Kansa was king of Mathurá, and he captured Vasudeva and his wife Devakí, imprisoned them in his own palace, set guards over them, and slew the six children whom Devakí had already borne. She was now about to give birth to the seventh, who was Balaráma, the playfellow of Krishńa, and, like him, supposed to be an incarnation of Vishńu; but by divine agency, the child was transferred before birth to the womb of Vasudeva's other wife, Rohiní, who was still at liberty, and was thus saved. Her eighth child was Krishńa, who was born at midnight, with a very black skin[2], and a peculiar curl of hair called the *Śrívatsa*, resembling a Saint Andrew's cross, on his breast. The gods now interposed to preserve the life of this favoured baby from Kansa's vigilance, and accordingly lulled the guards of the palace to sleep with the Yoga-nidrá, or mysterious slumber. Taking the infant, its father Vasudeva stole out undiscovered as far as the Yamuná, or Jumna, river, which seems to have been the boundary between the A'ryans and the aborigines. This he crossed, and on the other side found the cart and team of a nomad A'ryan cowherd, called Nanda, whose wife, Yashodá, had by strange coincidence just been delivered of a female child. Vasudeva, warned of this by divine admonition, stole to her bedside, and placing Krishńa by

[1] In Mr Thomson's edition of the *Bhagavad-Gítá*, pp. 134 sq. A longer summary will be found in M. Pavie's edition of the *Bhagavat Dasam Askand*, Pref. pp. xxxiv. sq.

[2] *Krishńa*, as an adjective, means simply *black*, which ought at once to dispose of the vulgar cavil that Χριστός is Krishńa slightly disguised. Each word grows naturally out of the character of the personage with whom it is associated.

her, re-crossed the river, and re-entered the palace, with the female baby of Yashodá in his arms, and thus substituted it for his own son. When Kansa discovered the cheat, he for a while gave up the affair, and set the prisoners at liberty, but ordered all male children to be put to death. Vasudeva then entrusted Krishńa to the care of Nanda, the cowherd, who took him to the village of Gokula, or Vraja, and there brought him up. Here Krishńa, and his elder brother Balaráma, who joined him, wandered about together as children, and evinced their divine character by many unruly pranks of surprising strength, such as kicking over the cart, which served as conveyance and domicile to Nanda and his family. The female Daitya Pútaná was sent to suckle him, but the refractory baby, discovering the trick, showed his gratitude by slaying her. Later in life he vanquished the serpent Kálíya in the middle of the Yamuná (Jumna) river. A demon, Arishta, assuming the form of a bull; another, Keshin, that of a horse; and a third, Kálanemi, all undertook to destroy the boy, but each fell victims to his superhuman strength. Krishńa now incited Nanda and the cowherds to abandon the worship of Indra, and to adopt that of the cows, which supported them, and the mountains, which afforded them pasturage. Indra, incensed at the loss of his offerings, opened the gates of heaven upon the whole race, and would have deluged them, had not our hero plucked up the mountain Govarddhana, and held it as a substantial umbrella above the land. He soon took to repose from his labours, and amused himself with the Gopís, or shepherdesses, of whom he married seven or eight, among whom Rádhá was the favourite, and to whom he taught the round dance called *Rása-*, or *Mańḋala-nrityam.* Meanwhile Kansa had not forgotten the prophecies of Nárada. He invited the two boys, Krishńa and Balaráma, to stay with him at Mathurá; they accepted, and went. At the gates, Kansa's washerman insulted Krishńa, who slew him, and dressed himself in his yellow clothes. He afterwards slew Kansa himself, and placed his father Ugrasena on the throne. A foreign king of the Kála-yavana (Indo-Scythian) race soon invaded the Yadu, or A'ryan, territory, whereupon Krishńa built and fortified the town of Dwáraka, in Guzerat, and thither transferred the inhabitants of Mathurá. He afterwards married Satyabhámá, daughter of Satrájit, and carried off Rukmińí, daughter of Bhíshmaka. His

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harem numbered sixty thousand wives, but his progeny was limited to eighteen thousand sons. When afterwards on a visit to Indra's heaven, he behaved, at the persuasion of his wife, Satyabhámá, in a manner very unbecoming a guest, by stealing the famous Párijáta tree, which had been produced at the churning of the ocean, and was then thriving in Indra's garden. A contest ensued, in which Krishńa defeated the gods, and carried off the sacred tree. At another time, a female Daitya, Ushá, daughter of Bána, carried off Krishńa's grandson, Aniruddha. His grandfather, accompanied by Ráma, went to the rescue, and though Bána was defended by Śiva and Skanda, proved victorious. Pauńdraka, one of Vasudeva's family, afterwards assumed his title and insignia, supported by the king of Benares. Krishńa hurled his flaming discus (*chakra*) at this city, and thus destroyed it. He afterwards exterminated his own tribe, the Yádavas. He himself was killed by a chance shot from a hunter. He is described as having curly black hair, as wearing a club or mace, a sword, a flaming discus, a jewel, a conch, and a garland. His charioteer is Sátyaki; his city, Dwáraka; his heaven, Goloka."

Resemblances to sacred history.

The reader will not fail to notice in this legend more than one exact coincidence with circumstances in the human history of our blessed Lord. Remote as are the main ideas which it embodies from the principles of Holy Writ, there is sufficient also of external correspondence to account for the alacrity with which the modern infidel has seized upon the tale of Krishńa, and has tortured it into an argument against the truth of Christianity. Nor has the abstract I have just been quoting brought before us every minor point[1] in which the incidents of the Gospel are supposed to be as clearly visible. Other versions of the Krishńa-legend tells us how, in addition to the marvellous birth at midnight,

[1] See a pointed summary of these in Maurice's *Hist. of Hindostan*, II. 222, 223, Lond. 1820.

choirs of *dévatas,* resembling the angelic host of Bethlehem, saluted the divine infant as soon as he was born. They give still greater prominence to the massacre of the innocents by Kansa, and his failing to secure possession of the child by whom he was at last to be supplanted. They narrate how, in the train of miracles that follow this deliverance, the young hero, to the great amazement of his parents and a troop of cowherds by whom he was attended, overcame the serpent Kálíya, and trampled on its head; while of particular acts ascribed to him in after-years by the compilers of the more expanded version of the story, the cleansing of lepers, the raising of the dead, his own descending to the world invisible and reascending to the proper paradise of Vishńu, are not the least conspicuous.

Heathen parallels.

It is true indeed that not a few of these minute resemblances to sacred history, if taken one by one, have also parallels in other realms of heathendom, and therefore may be possibly explained as merely outward and fortuitous, or else as borrowing their chief force from arbitrary combinations and the specious and deceptive colouring under which we are accustomed to present them. Two or three examples from Greek writers will best illustrate my meaning. If Krishńa was violently persecuted in his infancy, it might be answered, so was Hercules exposed to the implacable rage of Juno. If Krishńa, in his triumphs, comes before us crowned with flowers and at the head of dancing milk-maids and intoxicated satyrs, the description will apply to Bacchus also. If Krishńa, veiling his divinity, is said to have been concealed

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beneath the roof of Nanda, the cowherd, Apollo in like manner, acted like an ordinary mortal when he sought a shelter in the household of Admetus. Or again, if Krishńa is to be regarded as a purely human and historical hero, doomed to death in childhood from forebodings that his life would prove the ruin of another, we can find his parallel in the elder Cyrus, who had also been entrusted to the care of herdsmen, to preserve him from the vengeance of his royal grandfather, whose death it was foretold he should eventually accomplish.

Probability of external communication between Krishńäism and Christianity.

Yet in placing these analogies before the reader, as suggesting to one class of minds a *possible* medium for explaining the resemblances which form the subject of our investigation, I am willing to admit that such a method does not give what seems to me a satisfactory account of all the parallels in question, more especially when we include the minor topics furnished by more ample versions of the Krishńa-legend. Many of these, I grant, might have been accidental; but *all* can scarcely be so treated, without violence to probability and ordinary experience. If then we adopt the theory of external intercourse as furnishing the simplest and most adequate explanation of the present phenomena, it must follow either that Christianity has borrowed from Hinduism or Hinduism from Christianity.

The revealed idea of Christ original.

Now the former supposition is at once repudiated by the fact that our doctrine of the Incarnation and Messiahship of Christ is perfectly original in itself and perfectly consistent with the language of the Hebrew prophets. Even the astounding incidents of the Saviour's childhood,

which are thought to be most nearly related to the Krishńa-legend, are proved, in our own Gospels, to have been foretold by men who flourished long before the Bráhman had begun to dream of *avatáras:* and with reference to the Promise generally, its form was thoroughly *Hebrew,* interwoven from first to last with the exalted destinies of Abraham and David, pointing ever with a firmer hand and larger measure of illumination to the wondrous facts of Nazareth and Bethlehem, foreshadowing the persecutions which befel the Man of Sorrows as the necessary precondition of the 'glory that should follow;' and in all the course of this mysterious evolution, blending with itself no heterogeneous or extrinsic element, much less an element originating on the far-off borders of the Yamuná, and in the cloister of some Bráhman devotee.

Did Christianity modify the Krishńa-legend?

But if the character of our Messianic doctrine be thus singular and self-consistent, and if all attempts to draw it out of foreign sources are discovered to be futile, what are we to think of the other hypothesis, according to which the Krishńa-legend is indebted for at least a portion of its richness and embellishment to influences diffused by Christianity? Can we offer any adequate explanation of the Christian elements in Krishńäism, by supposing that there was an actual intercourse of some kind or other between the two religions?

To answer this question, we must distinguish, in the first place, between Krishńa considered as an ancient hero, and the Krishńa who is ultimately said to be identical with the Supreme Being, and the leading member in a system of religion and philosophy.

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Krishńäism, properly so called, subsequent to Christianity.

Now that Krishńa, though unnoticed in the very oldest literature of India, may have already figured as a local hero in the period preceding the Great War, and subsequently, as the Hercules of the Panjáb, may have attracted to himself the reverence of his fellow-countrymen, are suppositions by no means improbable. The allusion of Megasthenes[1] to some such hero, far surpassing other men in strength of mind and body, and especially distinguished by his zeal in purifying land and water and destroying every form of noxious animal, will bear to be interpreted of Krishńa, as well as Balaráma and the rest, whom popular superstition had exalted far above the rank of ordinary mortals. Yet this reference of the language has not been suffered to pass on without a challenge[2]; and other arguments, alleged in favour of the high antiquity of Krishńa, have been weakened more and more by modern criticism. When, for instance, he was represented as the central object[3]

[1] Megasthenis *Indica*, ed. Schwanbeck, p. 290: *καθαρὸν ποιῆσαι τῶν θηρίων γῆν τε καὶ θάλατταν*: cf. Lassen, I. 647, 648.

[2] Lassen, in replying to some of Weber's observations (cf. above, p. 89, n. 2) on the peculiarities of Krishńaïsm, investigates the origin of the Avatára-system (II. 1106 sq.), and concludes that the doctrine of Vishńu's incarnations was formed at least three centuries before the Christian era, although the number and order of such incarnations were first settled at a later period. To these arguments Weber has replied in detail (*Ind. Stud.* II. 409 sq.), questioning among other things, the identity of Krishńa with the Indian Hercules of Greek writers. In any case, he argues, this hero or demi-god was no incarnation, in the proper sense of the language, and was very different from the Krishńa of later times. In the Avatára-system the grand peculiarity consisted not in the fact that some divinity assumed a human or animal form, and in it protected and purified the earth, but rather 'dass der Gott aus Mitleid mit der leidenden, aus Zorn gegen die sündige Menschheit *selbst* als Mensch geboren wird und ein menschliches Dasein führt.' (p. 411.)

[3] See, for instance, Elphinstone's *India*, p. 93, 3rd ed.; and a rectification of the statement in Lassen, I. 488.

of the *Mahábhárata,* the statement was devoid of all solid basis. The real heroes of that poem are the Pán'davas; and if it be remembered that of the 100,000 distichs in the poem only 24,000[1] can be shewn to have entered into the original composition; and further, that the tales relating to Krishn'a's boyhood, his frolics at Vrindávan, and even his destruction of the Asuras, 'have all a modern complexion[2],' we may fairly doubt if the author of the poem, as it stood at first, knew anything of Krishn'a beyond his character of hero, prince, or chieftain. This, at least, may be regarded as extremely probable, *viz.* that the splendid episode (the *Bhagavad-Gítá*) which made us first acquainted with his claims to superhuman power and dignity, which first identified his being with that of the Supreme, and first brought out distinctly the idea of sympathy with the human species and of periodic births in order to promote their welfare, was composed as late as the third century of the Christian era. It may be inferred accordingly, that all our certain knowledge respecting Krishn'a, in the times preceding the diffusion of the Gospel, is confined to very few particulars. He was, first of all, a man possessed of more than ordinary virtue and intelligence; and secondly, a hero acting as the leader of the shepherd-chieftains in his own immediate neighbourhood; and thirdly, a demigod or emanation, it may be, especially connected with Vishn'u, and zealous for the purity and permanence of physical creation. As to the development of this idea and its amalgamation with the higher

[1] Lassen, I. 484, 489.
[2] Wilson, *Pref.* to *Vishn'u Purán'a,* p. lxxi. and p. 492, note.

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thoughts propounded in the *Bhagavad-Gítá*, I think them products of external agencies connected with the spread of Christianity. It has been shewn elsewhere how numerous, in the early ages of the Gospel, were the causes predisposing men to interchange religious speculations, and how numerous also were the channels by which intercourse might have been readily effected. I have also quoted[1] the opinion of a critic conspicuous in this field of ancient literature, who maintains that in one of the latest additions to the *Mahábhárata* allusion to such intercourse is clearly traceable, as well as hints of the effect produced by it, in modifying men's ideas of God, and also in imparting a fresh form and colour to the Hindu theory of incarnations. Nor is this opinion, in so far as Krishńa is concerned, of recent origin. Sir William Jones, whose interest was excited by minute resemblances between the legend of Krishńa in its newest form and certain narratives of Holy Writ, attempted to explain the 'motley story' on the supposition that 'spurious Gospels, which abounded in the first age of Christianity, had been brought to India, and the wildest part of them repeated to the Hindus, who engrafted them on the old fable of Céśava, the Apollo of Greece[2].' The same view has, in substance, been adopted by many other scholars[3], who have also pointed out that one of the chief media by which Hindu mythographers obtained their knowledge of the early history of our Lord, and the peculiar source from which they borrowed hints for the embellishment of their

Influence exerted by the spurious Gospels.

[1] Above, p. 92, n. 1.
[2] *Asiat. Resear.* I. 274.
[3] *e.g.* Maurice, *Hist. of Hindostan*, II. 218, sq. Lond. 1820.

story, was the *Evangelium Infantiæ*[1], an apocryphal writing known originally by the title of 'Gospel of St Thomas,' and, perhaps from a supposed connexion with him, circulated at an early period on the coast of Malabar. It is significant also that this gospel was already current[2] among heretics, but reprobated by the Church herself, as early as the time of Irenæus, and was subsequently held in special honour by the followers of Mani[3], and by other misbelievers like him; their object being, as we know, to blend the creed, the legends, and the institutes of paganism with some of the distinctive elements of supernatural religion.

Fundamental differences between Krishńäism and Christianity;

But leaving all these questions, as we must do, in comparative obscurity, it is important to observe that Krishńäism, when purged from all the lewd and Bacchanalian adjuncts which disfigure and debase it, comes indefinitely short of Christianity. Regarded in its brighter aspect, it will prove that man is far from satisfied with the prevailing forms of nature-worship, and is struggling to become more conscious of the personality of God, and panting for complete communion with Him. It recognises the idea of God descending to the level of the fallen creature and becoming man[4]. It

1 Printed in the *Codex Apocryphus*, ed. J. A. Fabricius, I. 127 sq.

2 *Adversus Hæres.* lib. I. c. 20, ed. Stieren.

3 See the 'Testimonia' collected by Fabricius, pp. 133, 136, 138, 140. In the decree of Pope Gelasius, *De libris apocryphis*, it is called 'Evangelium nomine *Thomæ* apostoli, quo utuntur Manichæi.'

4 See Wilson's *Vishńu Puráńa*, p. 492, n. 3, where it is explained that although Krishna as to his human properties and condition was only 'a part of a part' (*anśánśávatára*) of the supreme Brahma, yet he was in reality 'the very supreme Brahma.' The commentator adds an observation acknowledging it to be 'a mystery how the supreme should assume the form of a man.'

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welcomes Krishńa as one realization of this great idea, as the hero who was sent to lighten many a burden of pain and misery under which the universe was groaning, as the teacher who alone could save mankind by pointing out a method of escape from the necessity of repeated births. These yearnings after something higher, purer, and more heavenly, are discernible at intervals amid the very sternest forms of pantheism; they bear witness, notwithstanding all the flagrant contradictions in the system with which they are connected, to a consciousness of moral guilt, as well as to a sense of physical evil; they give rise to the anticipation, that mankind will ultimately burst the trammels of their adversary and be reconciled to God.

on the subject of the Incarnation.

Yet, on the other hand, the dogma of Hindus, when measured by a Christian standard, is but shadowy and unsatisfying. The most perfect incarnation of Vishńu, as found in Krishńa, is *docetic* merely; it rather seems to be than is[1]. According to the theory of matter, which prevailed among his followers, the Divine and human could not truly come together, and could not permanently coexist. The one essentially excludes the other. Krishńa, therefore, on going back to his celestial home, or, in the language of philosophy, on his reabsorption into the Great Spirit of the universe, entirely lays aside the perishable flesh, which he had once inhabited. He quits his human body; he abandons 'the condition of the three-fold qualities;' he unites himself with 'his own pure, spiritual, inexhaustible, inconceivable, unborn, undecaying, imperishable and

[1] Dorner (*Lehre von der Person Christi*, I. 7 sq. Stuttgart, 1845) has some excellent remarks on this point.

universal spirit, which is one with Vásudeva[1].' In this respect, he differs altogether from the God-Man of the Christian Church,—the Mediator in whom Divine and human are completely reconciled, the Meeting-point where earth and heaven, the finite and the Infinite, the personal and Absolute, have coalesced for ever, and are wedded in the bonds of an indissoluble union. And as one result of such imperfect and confused idea, it followed that the blessings said to have been brought by Krishńa were not real and abiding: they could only last until the close of one particular age, or period, when the powers of evil, softened and repressed, but still, according to this view, incapable of subjugation, would break forth again with irresistible violence, and be everywhere triumphant. It is written in one of the *Puráńas:* 'The day that Krishńa shall have departed from the earth will be the first of the Kali age[2].'

[1] *Vishńu Pur.* ed. Wilson, p. 612. The death of Krishńa is here ascribed to a random shot of the hunter Jará (*i.e.* infirmity, old age, decay.)

[2] *Ibid.* p. 487. In like manner it is stated (p. 486), 'As long as the earth was touched by his sacred feet, the Kali age could not affect it.'

CHAPTER III.

Real Correspondencies between Hinduism and Revealed Religion.

'Nulla porro falsa doctrina est, quæ non aliqua vera intermisceat.'
ST AUGUSTINE.

Unity of the human race.

IT has been shewn[1] how various but converging arguments, for which we are indebted mainly to the light of modern science, have all tended to corroborate the scriptural narrative with reference to the common origin of men. Exactly therefore in proportion as this point has been established, it is likely that the different sections of the human family will preserve in their dispersion many an interesting fragment of primeval knowledge, and contribute to the reconstruction of primeval history. If all have radiated from one centre; if all inherit the same human faculties, and have been actuated by the same peculiar instincts, we shall be prepared to find, with local variations, and at different depths below the surface, many a link of that great chain which girdles the whole globe, and binds humanity together.

Transmission of religious knowledge.

Proofs of common parentage may all indeed have been obscured and weakened by a multitude of disuniting agencies, as climate, isolation, force of character, and the like. Two stories of the ancient world may in the process of trans-

[1] Part I. ch. II.

mission have been blended into one. The names of persons may have been entirely lost or hopelessly corrupted. The scene of this or that catastrophe may have been altered for the gratification of individual caprice or national vanity. A race of simple shepherds, with none of the explicit guidance which is furnished by a written document, may have so magnified, embellished, and confused the stories and traditions of their ancestors, that all the ingenuity of modern criticism will prove unequal to the work of disentangling the historic from the mythic, and of weeding out the genuine from the false. Yet, notwithstanding these formidable obstructions, we are warranted, on the hypothesis of unity, in searching everywhere, as far as human steps have wandered, for remains of a substratum of primeval knowledge; confident that such remains had once extended on all sides with the extension of the human species, however much they are at present buried and corrupted, broken and displaced. And the tenacity with which the popular mind has ever clung to what is ancient and established, will further justify us in predicting that the many would retain their hold on the original traditions of the Indo-A'ryan race, long after the philosopher had ceased to care about them, or provide a place for them in his new system of ethics and religion.

Hindu reverence for tradition.

Let us, then, inquire, as far as may be, whether such hints can be derived from any of the extant documents of India, and more particularly from one class of writings, the Puranic[1], which, as

[1] It is true, as I have more than once observed, that the Puránas in their present form are thoroughly sectarian, and therefore must have

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meant for the instruction of the people, may be naturally expected to embody and reflect the popular traditions. We are not a little strengthened in these expectations by the fact that nearly all the ancient writings of Hindus, so far from advocating the notion that truth is self-evolved, or a discovery of the human reason[1], recognise in God the only Source of supernatural teaching; and so far from urging that the present age alone is in possession of such teaching, they proclaim their frequent obligation to the purer wisdom of antiquity, and to the guidance of the 'sages who have delivered it to us[2].' 'Truth,' they say, 'was originally deposited with men, but gradually slumbered and was forgotten: the knowledge of it returns like a recollection[3].'

Points most likely to be transmitted.

Now the points that were most likely to be cherished in the memory of the ancient world were not so much the details of primeval history, as those marvellous and momentous facts, which, happening in the infancy of time, and prior to the date of the original dispersion, were supposed to bear directly on the hopes, and fears, and general fortunes of the human species, or were fitted by the startling or attractive shape which they assumed in primitive lays and legends to excite the cravings of the earnest heart, and fire the popular imagination.

been all modernized; but whenever the remodelling of them took place there can be no doubt that very old materials were extensively employed. See Prof. Wilson's Pref. to the *Vishnu Puráńa*, p. lxiii.

[1] Thus, for example, it is expressly said by a philosopher, (*Sancara*, ed. Fr. Windischmann, p. 106), 'dass man nicht durch Vermittelung von Vernunftgründen, sondern durch Hülfe der von jeher überlieferten Lehren Brahma erreichen könne.'

[2] *Yajur-Veda*, XL. 10, 13, as quoted by Morris, *Essay*, p. 60.

[3] See Humboldt's *Cosmos*, II. 112, 113, Sabine's ed.

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Such points are:

1. The primitive state of man.
2. His fall.
3. His punishment in the deluge.
4. The rite of sacrifice.
5. The primitive hope of restoration.

§ 1. *The primitive state of Man.*

The original pair.

Inconsistent as may be the various Hindu stories touching the creation of this visible universe, and the original innocence and dignity of men, 'it is not difficult,' writes a high authority[1], 'to detect through all their embellishments and corruptions, the tradition of the *descent of mankind from a single pair,* however much they have disguised it, by the misemployment of the figures of allegory and personification.'

According to one view, Brahmá, the god of creation, had converted himself into two persons, the first man, or the Manu Swáyambhuva, and the first woman, or Satarúpá[2]: this division into halves expressing, it would seem, the general distinction of corporeal substance into two sexes, and

[1] Prof. Wilson, *Lectures,* p. 56. Buddhism, on the contrary, having lost all faith in a Creator, and contending that the rise and perishing of the world is 'by nature itself,' rejected the idea of an original pair. 'There was no such thing as that of the creation of the first man and woman.' Upham, *Sacred Books of Ceylon,* III. 1, 2, Lond. 1833. Yet this statement is somewhat modified, p. 17.

[2] *Vishńu Pur.* pp. 51, 52. In the *Laws of Manu,* (I. 32), the same notion is expressed in a somewhat different form. After stating (§ 31) that for the multiplication of the human race, the Creator caused the four castes to proceed respectively from his mouth, his arm, his thigh and his foot, it is added: 'Having divided his own substance, the mighty power Brahmá became half male and half female.'

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Satarúpá, as hinted by the etymology of the word itself, denoting the great universal mother, the one parent of a 'hundred forms.' A second representation is that, in the opening of the present *kalpa*, Brahmá created out of his own substance as many as a 'thousand pairs[1]' of each of the four classes, into which mankind has been distributed. But since these statements are both found at no great distance from each other in the same *Puráńa*, they are probably intended to be reconciled by supposing that in the former case we have a Hindu reminiscence of the history of creation, and in the second an ideal picture of the primitive race of human beings. Be this, however, as it may, the Hindu legends are agreed in representing man as one of the last products of creative wisdom, as the master-work of God, and also in extolling the first race of men as pure and upright, innocent and happy. 'The beings who were thus created by Brahmá are all said to have been endowed with righteousness and perfect faith; they abode wherever they pleased, unchecked by any impediment; their hearts were free from guile; they were pure, made free from soil by observance of sacred institutes. In their sanctified minds Hari dwelt; and they were filled with perfect wisdom by which they contemplated the glory of Vishńu[2].'

Innocence of primeval men.

Their noble origin.

The first men were accordingly the best. The Krita age, 'the age of truth,' the reign of purity, in which mankind, as it came forth from the Creator, was not divided into numerous conflicting orders, and in which the different faculties of man all worked harmoniously together,

[1] *Vishńu Pur.* p. 45 and n. 4. [2] *Ibid.*

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was a thought that lay too near the human heart to be uprooted by the ills and inequalities of actual life. In this the Hindu sided altogether with the Hebrew, and as flatly contradicted the unworthy speculations of the modern philosopher, who would fain persuade us that human beings have not issued from one single pair, and also that the primitive type of men is scarcely separable from that of ordinary animals. In the former of these conclusions it is true he may appeal on his behalf to theorisings of the Buddhists; but with reference to the latter, they also were equally unable to cast off the tenets of their forefathers. It is held that a distinguished group of beings (*brahmas*) whose merit was insufficient to support them any longer in superior worlds[1], took refuge on the earth, and as the lustre of their ancient greatness lingered round about them, they retained one class of superhuman attributes; they were able to subsist without food, and gifted with the power of passing through the air at will. No change of seasons, and no alternation of night and day could be experienced in their neighbourhood; and free from all the present accidents of humanity, they lived for ages in unbroken peace and inexhaustible felicity. Whether this legend of the *brahmas* be regarded as an echo of some old tradition pointing to the first estate of men, or to the fall of angels, is comparatively immaterial: it evinces a belief that primitive inhabitants of the earth ranked higher than the beasts that perish, and were strangers to the guilt and darkness which have pressed so heavily on their descendants.

Buddhist legend.

[1] Hardy, *Manual of Buddhism*, p. 64.

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Bráhmanical reminiscences of Paradise.

The Bráhman and the Buddhist, in like manner, have preserved some recollections of the nature of the spot in which those first inhabitants were planted. According to legends of the former[1], the abode of man in his primeval innocence was the fabled mount Méru, the 'centre' of the globe. 'It is a high and beauteous mountain. From the glittering surface of its peaks the sun diffuses light into the far-off regions. Arrayed in gold it forms a worthy habitation for the *dévas* and *gandharvas.* Hideous dragons guard this mountain; they frighten back the sinner who ventures to approach it. The sides are covered over with plants of heavenly origin; and no finite thought can soar as high as the cloud-piercing summit. It is adorned with graceful trees and limpid waters; and on every side resounds the music of the birds.' To this description of the *Mahábhárata,* some other features may be added from different sources. The position of Méru is in the centre of a region called Ilávrita[2]; it is said to be enclosed by the river Ganges, 'which, issuing from the foot of Vishńu, and washing the lunar orb, falls here from the skies, and, after encircling the city, divides into four mighty rivers, flowing in opposite directions[3].' On the summit of the mountain is the dwelling-place of Śiva, as well as the capital of Brahmá. There also is the home of blessed spirits; there is Nandana, the grove of Indra[4], and there

[1] See Lüken's *Traditionen des Menschengeschlechts,* pp. 65, 66, Münster, 1856; Faber's *Origin of Pagan Idolatry,* I. 314 sq. Lond. 1816, and Bähr's *Symbolik des Mosaischen Cultus,* I. 168. Heidelberg, 1837.

[2] Mr Faber attempts, but unsuccessfully, to connect this name *Ilávrita,* which he also writes *Ida-Vratta,* with *Eden.* (I. 326).

[3] *Vishńu Pur.* ed. Wilson, pp. 169, 170.

[4] *Ibid.* p. 169.

the Jambu-tree[1], whose apples, large as elephants, feed the Jambu-river with their juices, and secure to all who drink of it unvarying health and happiness, and exemption from all physical decay. It is manifest that the scene of all this blessedness was placed by the Hindu mythographers among the lofty peaks of the Himálaya. In sight of them the A'ryan had originally settled when he crossed the alpine frontier; and as time went over, and his children were still further severed from the primitive haunts of man, the glorious high-lands of the north were peopled by his ever-active imagination with groups of mythic beings. There was the locality from which the founders of the Indo-A'ryan race had issued: and there the theatre on which, according to his dreams, had been enacted all the mysteries of the ancient world. Those legends, therefore, notwithstanding a huge mass of wild exaggerations, will bear witness to primeval verities. They intimate how in the background of man's visions lay a Paradise of holy joy,—a Paradise secured from every kind of profanation, and made inaccessible to the guilty; a Paradise full of objects that were calculated to delight the senses and to elevate the mind; a Paradise that granted to its tenant rich and rare immunities, and that fed with its perennial streams the tree of life and immortality. The waters also of Ilávrita, divided as they were into four channels, and flowing towards the cardinal points, may not unnaturally suggest comparison with the primitive river that 'went out of Eden to water the garden; and from thence was parted and became into four heads'

[1] *Ibid.* p. 168.

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(Gen. ii. 10): although in course of time when mount Méru was commonly identified with the summits of the Hindu Alps, we might expect that those four streams would in like manner be discovered in the principal rivers that descend from the Himálaya[1].

Buddhist reminiscences of Paradise.

This legend of the Bráhmans in the hands of Buddhist rivals has been subjected to fresh embellishment. The latter in depicting Mahá-Méru, inform us[2] of 'square-faced inhabitants,' who are exempted from all kinds of sickness, and from other evils incident to humanity. 'They do not perform any kind of work, as they receive all they want, whether as to ornaments, clothes, or food, from a tree called *kalpa-wurksha*. This tree is 100 yojanas high, and when the people require anything, it is not necessary that they should go to it to receive it, as the tree extends its branches, and gives whatever is desired. When they wish to eat, food is at that instant presented; and when they wish to lie down, couches at once appear. There is no relationship, as to father, mother, or brother. The women are more beautiful than the *dévas*. There is no rain, and no houses are required. In the whole region there is no low place or valley. It is like a wilderness of pearls; and always free from all impurities, like the court of a temple or a wall of crystal. The inhabitants live to be a thousand years old; and all this time they

[1] The names of the rivers in the *Vishńu Puráńa* are the Śítá (the river of China, or Hoangho), the Alakanandá (a main branch of the Ganges), the Chakshu (? the Oxus), and the Bhadrá (the Oby of Siberia): see Prof. Wilson's note, p. 171. The Buddhists also have their four holy rivers, and place the sacred garden at the foot of mount Méru, towards the south-west, and at the source of the Ganges: Faber, I. 325.

[2] Hardy's *Manual of Buddhism*, pp. 14, 15.

enjoy themselves like the *dêvas*, by means of their own merit and with the assistance of the kalpa-tree.'

§ 2. *The Fall of Man.*

But while so many legends of the ancient A'ryan intimate with singular unanimity that man as he came forth from his Creator was both innocent and happy; while they point us to an age of truth, of light, of perfectness, and lead us backward to a spot, whose primal beauties were unsullied by the breath of physical and moral evil, they have spoken as distinctly of some fearful retrogression, of degeneracy without us and within us, of bodily decay, of mental obscuration, of estrangement from the Source of Life, and of expulsion from our first inheritance. 'The deep sense of this fact,' writes Coleridge[1], 'and the doctrines grounded on obscure traditions of the promised remedy, are seen struggling, and now gleaming, now flashing, through the mist of pantheism, and producing the incongruities and gross contradictions of the Bráhman mythology: while in the rival sect,—in that most strange phenomenon, the religious atheism of the Buddhists, with whom God is only universal matter considered abstractedly from all particular forms—the fact is placed among the delusions natural to man.'

General form of the Hindu doctrine.

If we consider only the more popular doctrine of the Bráhmans, it is found to be in substance that which has impressed itself on all religions of antiquity, and forms the basis of all creeds what-

[1] *Aids to Reflection*, I. 225, 226, Pickering's ed.

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ever: *viz.* that sufferings were entailed upon the world at large by the disordered will or appetite of individuals, impelling them to seek for gratification by eating of some interdicted products of the soil. This vivid consciousness of retrogression, in its moral aspect, was obscured, indeed, from time to time by the Hindu philosopher, who, advancing from pantheistic premises, adopted the well-known hypothesis of chronological cycles. In his teaching every perfect revolution in the fortunes of the universe (*mahá-yuga*) is divided into four shorter periods[1], which are each in turn invested with specific qualities corresponding to assumed distinctions in the general history of man. Thus, after the Krita or Satya-age, when everything is true and perfect, comes the Tretá-yuga, or age of sacrifice, when virtue having 'lost one foot' and the divine ingredient in our spirit[2] waxing feeble, 'the innate perfectness of human nature is no more evolved.' After this appears the Dwápara-age, the age of doubt, of scepticism, of infidelity; and last of all the Kali-age, through which the world is said to be at present passing, when

Chronological cycles.

[1] *Vishńu Pur.* Book I. chap. iii. As Professor Wilson remarks, 'It does not seem necessary to refer the invention [of these cycles] to any astronomical computations, or to any attempt to represent actual chronology.'

[2] Vishńu on becoming subject to the conditions of time (Kála) is said to have himself 'infused into created beings sin, as yet feeble though formidable, or passion and the like.' (*Ibid.* p. 45.) This led directly to the loss of the eight kinds of perfection, which the human race had once enjoyed: (1) *Rasollásá*, the spontaneous or prompt evolution of the juices of the body, independently of nutriment from without: (2) *Tripti*, mental satisfaction, or freedom from sensual desire: (3) *Sámya*, sameness of degree: (4) *Tulyatá*, similarity of life, form and feature: (5) *Visoká*, exemption alike from infirmity or grief: (6) Consummation of penance and meditation, by attainment of true knowledge: (7) The power of going everywhere at will: (8) The faculty of reposing at any time and in any place.

the powers of darkness and disorder have become predominant in the soul of man, and when external nature groans beneath the burden of iniquity.

More precise traditions of the Bráhmans.

Yet side by side with such elaborate theories on the origin of evil and the probable course of its development from generation to generation, there lingered in the memory of Hindus a far more definite knowledge of primeval history, and of the agencies through which the present lot of man was rendered so abnormal. They had learned that human misery is the fruit of disobedience; that the physical ills of life originate in moral delinquency, and that of parent sins, by which the world at large was ultimately overrun, the chief are pride and self-complacency, ambition and self-worship. One legend out of many shall be cited in illustration of this topic. As the old traditions of their ancestors were gradually distorted, the Hindus appear to have identified the first man (Manu Swáyambhuva) with Brahmá himself, of whom, as of the primary cause, he was the brightest emanation; while Śatarúpá, the wife and counterpart of Manu, was similarly converted into the bride of the creative principle itself. Brahmá, in other words, was 'confounded with the male half of his individuality[1],' so that the narratives which in sacred history relate to Adam and Eve, were not unfrequently transferred to Brahmá and to his female counterpart,—Śatarúpá, or, according to a different form, Saraswatí. Brahmá thus humanized is said to have become the subject of tempta-

[1] *Ibid.* p. 53, note.

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tion[1]. To try him, Śiva, who is, in the present story, identified with the Supreme Being, drops from heaven a blossom of the sacred *vat'a,* or Indian fig, —a tree which has been always venerated by the natives on account of its gigantic size and grateful shadow, and invested alike by Bráhman and by Buddhist with mysterious significations[2], as 'the tree of knowledge or intelligence' (*bódhidruma*). Captivated by the beauty of this blossom, the first man (Brahmá) is determined to possess it. He imagines that it will entitle him to occupy the place of the Immortal and hold converse with the Infinite: and on gathering up the blossom, he at once becomes intoxicated by this fancy, and believes himself immortal and divine. But ere the flush of exultation has subsided, God Himself appears to him in terrible majesty, and the astonished culprit, stricken by the curse of heaven, is banished far from Brahmapattana and consigned to an abyss of misery and degradation. From this, however, adds the story, an escape is rendered possible on the expiration of some weary term of suffering and of penance. And the parallelism which it presents to sacred history is well-nigh completed when the legend tells us further that woman, his own wife, whose being was derived from his, had instigated the ambitious hopes which led to their expulsion, and entailed so many ills on their posterity.

Buddhist traditions.

It is also worthy of remark, that Buddhism, in spite of deep and fundamental misconceptions[3],

[1] The story is thus extracted in Lücken's *Traditionen des Menschengeschlechts*, pp. 83, 84.

[2] Lassen, I. 255—260.

[3] See above, p. 60; and Hardy's *Manual*, pp. 65, 66.

has retained at least a glimmering of primeval truth in reference to the fall of man as well as to his origin and loftier destinies. The Buddhists of Ceylon, for instance, have been taught that a class of spirits, who survived the wreck of previous worlds and systems, had, on their migration to the human sphere of being, lost another portion of their primal dignity. They were deprived of their perfections, we are told, by reason of 'their covetousness and by eating of all sorts of food, which lust effected in them. Thus they became man and woman, according to their fate, from whom we have all proceeded[1].'

Bráhmanical doctrine of the Tempter.

But while some Hindu philosophers attributed the fall of man to a necessity inherent in the very nature of all finite emanations; while others saw in it the consequence of our association with time and matter; and while a third division, more alive to the realities of life and to the moral bearings of the fall, were willing to regard it as a penalty incurred by guilty spirits in a previous stage of their existence, the majority of the people clung more closely to traditions of their ancestors. The Buddhist, it is true, denied emphatically that the origin of evil is ascribable to any cause except 'the mischievous and corrupted temper of man[2]:' but in the creed of popular Bráhmanism, the sin of our first parents was traced up directly to the guile and malice of a tempter, not within us but without us. That tempter was, in form at least, a serpent.

[1] *Sacred Books of Ceylon*, ed. Upham, III. 17.

[2] *Ibid.* p. 157. When the further question is asked, 'Is the devil, or any other powerful spirit, the cause of sin?'—the Buddhist is taught to answer, 'by no means.'

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'Almost all the nations of Asia,' is the forced confession of a modern rationalist[1], 'assume the serpent to be a wicked being, which has brought evil into the world.' 'How strangely,' writes a second[2], 'is the serpent everywhere mixed up with the development of the religious sentiment in man.' As such it had become, in almost every part of heathendom, an object of religious worship[3], or, to speak more properly, a symbol of those deadly and terrific powers, which, present (as men thought) in serpents, were the objects of continual dread, and therefore, of religious deprecation. Serpents may indeed have been occasionally welcomed by the ancient A'ryan as the bringers or restorers of good fortune, just as they are sometimes fed in our day with reluctant interest at the doors of Hindu cottages and temples; but the common attitude which they assume in all descriptions both of ancient and modern writers is one of absolute antagonism to man. The Hindu serpent is the type and emblem of the evil principle in nature; and as such, we see it wrestling with the goddess Parvatí, or writhing under the victorious foot of Krishńa when he saves from its corrupting breath the herds that pasture near the waters of the Yamuná. And as a further illustration of this view, it is contended, that many Hindus who feel themselves constrained to pay religious worship to the serpent, regard it, notwithstanding, as

[1] Von Bohlen, *Das alte Indien*, I. 248: cf. Hävernick, *Intr.* I. *to the Pentateuch*, p. 101 (Edinb. 1850), where the fact that local peculiarities are wanting in the Hebrew narrative is referred to as a proof of its originality.

[2] Priaulx, *Quæstiones Mosaicæ*, p. 85, Lond. 1842.

[3] See Deane's *Worship of the Serpent*, pp. 65 sq. Lond. 1830.

a hideous reptile, whose approach inspires them with a secret awe and insurmountable horror.

The serpent considered as an image of matter generally.

But it may be necessary to investigate these questions somewhat more particularly, for the purpose of discriminating, if possible, between the character of the serpent when it forms the subject of a Hindu mythe, and when the subject of a Hindu legend. According to the first view, it is believed to be a symbol of primitive matter generally; according to the second, it is an image of the evil spirit, the seducer and arch-enemy of man. We are reminded[1] that anterior to the human epoch when Brahma is still sleeping on the waters and preparing to diffuse himself through all the various orders of creation, the *dévas* already brought into existence are anxious to ascertain what part has been reserved for them in the ensuing process. They petition the Great Father of beings (*Mahá-pitri*), and are made at his suggestion to precipitate themselves upon the earth in the shape of material elements, fire, air, water, and the like, with Indra as their head and leader. At this epoch also comes into the world the chief of the serpents (Kulikétu)[2], who has soon occasion to complain most bitterly to the Lord of the universe, that for no fault of his, he was continually tormented by the Suras,—or inferior gods inhabiting *Swarga* and composing the great army led by Indra in his conflict with the Asuras. In answer to the prayer of Kulikétu, Brahma is said to have enjoined that he should

[1] See an interesting paper *Sur le Mythe du Serpent chez les Hindous*, in the *Journal Asiatique*, Mai-Juin, 1855, pp. 469—529.

[2] The same as Kulika, one of the chiefs of the Nágas, or serpents: *Ibid.* p. 481.

henceforth receive adoration like the *dévas* from each human being, and that mortals who refused to pay such worship to him, should be cut off by some unnatural death and made incapable of rising higher in the scale of created beings.

I think it not improbable that the right interpretation of this mythe is one which has already been suggested. It directs us to behold in Kulikétu an emblem of the earth before it had been subjected to human culture, when it felt itself tormented by the Suras, or, in other words, assaulted by the armies of the firmament,—the rain, the lightning, and the tempest. In the midst of this disorder, man, who had been hitherto regardless of the soil on which his lot is cast, and the material out of which his body is constructed, was bidden by the Lord of creation to render homage to the powers and processes of nature, to propitiate the ungenial elements and welcome in all forms around him the immediate presence of Divinity.

The serpent considered as an image of the devil.

According therefore to this mythe the serpent was not absolutely and directly charged with the origination of all evil; yet suspicions of such agency were nevertheless implied from first to last in the conception of the story. There was lurking under its fantastic imagery an idea that matter in the whole compass and duration of it was intrinsically evil; and might therefore be identified with that which was the recognised embodiment of the evil principle. And other tales of ancient India bring this truth before us in the greatest prominence. Side by side with representations of the serpent as a type of primitive matter was unfolded the analogous conception of him as *the* enemy of the human

race[1]. For instance, at the opening of the *Mahábhárata* itself, we find a touching illustration of this subject. The young and beautiful Pramadvará has been affianced to the Bráhman Ruru, but just before the celebration of their nuptials she is bitten by a deadly serpent and expires in agony. As tidings of her death are carried round the neighbourhood, the Bráhmans and aged hermits flock together; and encircling the corpse of the departed mingle their tears with those of her disconsolate lover. Ruru is himself made eloquent by grief; he pleads the gentleness of his nature, and his dutiful observance of the laws of God: and finally, as the reward of his superior merits, Pramadvará is given back to him; yet only with the sad condition that he must surrender for her sake the half of his remaining lifetime. If this legend will not altogether justify the supposition[2] that a reference is intended by it to the primitive pair of human beings, whose existence was cut short by a disaster inflicted on the woman by the serpent, it may serve at least to shew us how familiar was the Hindu mind with such a representation, and how visions of the fall of man had never ceased to flit with more or less confusion across the memory of the ancient bards.

[1] *Ibid.* p. 488.

[2] 'N'y a-t-il point, dans cette donnée, comme un ressouvenir du couple primitif condamné à une vie courte et précaire à cause de la femme surprise par le serpent?...Dans la légende indienne, comme dans la fable grecque [*i. e.* of Orpheus and Eurydice], comme dans le récit biblique, c'est à la femme que le serpent s'adresse; il la choisit pour première victime, parcequ'elle est moins prudente, moins ferme en ses pensées que l'homme, son maître et son appui. Et dans quelles circonstances encore? Lorsque le bonheur sourit aux jeunes couples, et qu'aucun malheur ne semble les menacer de près ni de loin.' *Ibid.* pp. 490, 491.

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§ 3. *The Hindu version of the Deluge.*

Importance of the Deluge.

I shall not ask the reader to investigate a series of those minor points in which attempts are made to institute a clear connexion between the earliest Hindu legends and corresponding pages in the Scriptural history of man. But there is one catastrophe which, if the record of it in the Book of Genesis be accepted, could not fail to make a most profound impression in all quarters of the globe which had been visited by human footsteps. That catastrophe is the Deluge. The annals of the world begin afresh in Noah. The ark in which he rode securely to his destination is the second birth-place of the human family.

Now here again it is important to observe, that the Hindu traditions, notwithstanding the grotesque embellishments they underwent, from time to time, at the hands of the mythographers, were all in close accordance with the principal facts of revelation. They inform us how, amid an age of deep corruption, when the world was drowned by the avenging waters of a deluge, the Deity Himself came down to earth, in order to ensure the preservation of a righteous king, Manu, and to deposit with him in a ship the seeds of all created beings.

Modern form of the Hindu legend.

Like other legends of antiquity, the present one has varied greatly with the lapse of ages, and been coloured by the varying conceptions of the people among whom it was diffused. I shall first extract[1] the popular, or Puráńic, version

[1] *Asiat. Researches,* I. 230 sq.

which, as might have been anticipated, is the most exuberant of the forms transmitted to us:

"Desiring the preservation of herds, and of Bráhmans, of genii and of virtuous men, of the Védas, of law, and of precious things, the Lord of the universe assumes many bodily shapes: but, though he pervades, like the air, a variety of beings; yet he is himself unvaried, since he has no quality subject to change. At the close of the last Kalpa, there was a general destruction occasioned by the sleep of Brahmá; whence his creatures in different worlds were drowned in a vast ocean. Brahmá, being inclined to slumber, desiring repose after a lapse of ages, the strong demon Hayagríva came near him, and stole the Védas which had flowed from his lips. When Hari, the preserver of the universe, discovered this deed of the prince of Dánavas, he took the shape of a minute fish called Sap'harí. A holy king, named Satyavrata, then reigned; a servant of the spirit which moved on the waves, and so devout that water was his only sustenance. He was the child of the Sun; and, in the present Kalpa, is invested by Naráyańa in the office of Manu, by the name of Sráddhadéva, or the god of obsequies. One day, as he was making a libation in the river Kritamála, and held water in the palm of his hand, he perceived a small fish moving in it. The king of Dravira immediately dropped the fish into the river together with the water, which he had taken from it; when the Sap'harí thus pathetically addressed the benevolent monarch: 'How canst thou, O king, who shewest affection to the oppressed, leave me in this river-water, where I am too weak to resist the monsters of the stream, who fill me with dread?' He, not knowing who had assumed the form of a fish, applied his mind to the preservation of the Sap'harí, both from good nature, and from regard to his own soul; and, having heard its very suppliant address, he kindly placed it under his protection in a small vase full of water; but, in a single night, its bulk was so increased, that it could not be contained in the jar, and thus again addressed the illustrious prince: 'I am not pleased with living miserably in this little vase; make me a large mansion, where I may dwell in comfort.' The king, removing it thence, placed it in the water of a cistern; but it grew three cubits in less than fifty minutes, and said: 'O king, it pleases me not to stay vainly in

this narrow cistern; since thou hast granted me an asylum, give me a spacious habitation.' He then removed it, and placed it in a pool; where, having ample space around its body, it became a fish of considerable size. 'This abode, O king, is not convenient for me, who must swim at large in the waters: exert thyself for my safety, and remove me to a deep lake.' Thus addressed, the pious monarch threw the suppliant into a lake; and, when it grew of equal bulk with that piece of water, he cast the vast fish into the sea. When the fish was thrown into the waves, he thus again spoke to Satyavrata: 'Here the horned sharks, and other monsters of great strength, will devour me; thou shouldst not, O valiant man, leave me in this ocean.' Thus repeatedly deluded by the fish who had addressed him with gentle words, the king said: 'Who art thou, that beguilest me in that assumed shape? Never before have I seen or heard of so prodigious an inhabitant of the waters, who, like thee, hast filled up in a single day a lake of a hundred leagues in circumference. Surely thou art Bhagavat, who appearest before me; the great Hari, whose dwelling was on the waves, and who now, in compassion to thy servants, bearest the form of the natives of the deep. Salutation and praise to thee, O first male; the lord of creation, of preservation, of destruction! Thou art the highest object, O supreme ruler, of us thy adorers who piously seek thee. All thy delusive descents in this world give existence to various beings: yet I am anxious to know for what cause that shape has been assumed by thee. Let me not, O lotos-eyed, approach in vain the feet of a deity, whose perfect benevolence has been extended to all; when thou hast shewn, to our amazement, the appearance of other bodies, not in reality existing but successively exhibited.' The lord of the universe, loving the pious man who thus implored him, and intending to preserve him from the sea of destruction caused by the depravity of the age, thus told him how he was to act. 'In seven days from the present time, O thou tamer of enemies, the three worlds will be plunged in an ocean of death; but, in the midst of the destroying waters, a large vessel, sent by me for thy use, shall stand before thee. Then shalt thou take all medicinal herbs, all the variety of seeds; and, accompanied by seven saints, encircled by pairs of all brute animals, thou shalt enter the spacious ark, and continue in it, secure from the flood, on one immense ocean,

without light, except the radiance of thy holy companions. When the ship shall be agitated by an impetuous wind, thou shalt fasten it with a large sea-serpent on my horn; for I will be near thee: drawing the vessel with thee and thy attendants, I will remain on the ocean, O chief of men, until a night of Brahmá shall be completely ended. Thou shalt then know my true greatness, rightly named the supreme godhead. By my favour all thy questions shall be answered, and thy mind abundantly instructed.' Hari, having thus directed the monarch, disappeared; and Satyavrata humbly waited for the time, which the ruler of our senses had appointed. The pious king, having scattered towards the east the pointed blades of the grass *darbha*, and turning his face towards the north, sat meditating on the feet of the god who had borne the form of a fish. The sea, overwhelming its shores, deluged the whole earth; and it was soon perceived to be augmented by showers from immense clouds. He, still meditating on the command of Bhagavat, saw the vessel advancing, and entered it with the chiefs of Bráhmans, having carried into it the medicinal creepers and conformed to the directions of Hari. The saints thus addressed him: 'O king, meditate on Kés'ava; who will surely deliver us from this danger, and grant us prosperity.' The god, being invoked by the monarch, appeared again distinctly on the vast ocean in the form of a fish, blazing like gold, extending a million of leagues, with one stupendous horn: on which the king, as he had been before commanded by Hari, tied the ship with a cable made of a vast serpent, and, happy in his preservation, stood praising the destroyer of Madhu. When the monarch had finished his hymn, the primeval male, Bhagavat, who watched for his safety on the great expanse of water, spoke aloud to his own divine essence, pronouncing a sacred Purán'a, which contained the rules of the Sánkhya philosophy: but it was an infinite mystery to be concealed within the breast of Satyavrata; who, sitting in the vessel with the saints, heard the principle of the soul, the Eternal Being, proclaimed by the preserving power. Then Hari, rising together with Brahmá from the destructive deluge which was abated, slew the demon Hayagríva, and recovered the sacred books. Satyavrata, instructed in all divine and human knowledge, was appointed in the present Kalpa, by the favour of Vishn'u, the seventh Manu, surnamed Vaivaswata: but the

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appearance of a horned fish to the religious monarch was Máyá or delusion; and he, who shall devoutly hear this important allegorical narrative, will be delivered from the bondage of sin."

Peculiar characteristics of this legend:

This Puráńic version of the Deluge (for to that catastrophe alone has any of our modern scholars ventured to refer it) is, according to its own admission, coloured and disguised by allegorical imagery. It avows, for instance, that one prominent object in the picture, the phenomenon of the horned Fish, is *máyá*, or is based upon illusory ideas; while other features of it have an air of gloom and mysticism peculiar to productions of the Hindu mind in the ascetical, or Yoga, period of its history. There is, however, a different version[1] of the legend, shorter and far less ornate, in one of the great epic poems of India. That version contains no reference either to the sleep of Brahmá, the pilfering of the Védas, or the systems of Hindu chronology, which, as resting on the thought of a succession of similar worlds, may have themselves been primarily suggested by the story of the Deluge[2]. It is further silent with regard to the specific power by which Manu was able to collect together seeds of all existing things: nor was the author of it acquainted with those mighty serpents, who, in the Puráńic version, are said to have approached Manu and acted as the cords by which

A second version.

[1] Edited by Bopp, Berlin, 1829, with the title, *Die Sündfluth, nebst drei anderen der wichtigsten Episoden des Mahá-Bhárata.* The writer of this version, as it now stands, is made to refer, as his authority, to the account of the Matsya avatára, which has been given above; but Prof. Wilson argues (Pref. to *Vishńu Puráńa*, p. li.) that the story in the *Mahábhárata* is really more ancient.

[2] Cf. Lüken *Traditionen des Menschen-geschlechts*, pp. 187, 188.

his ark was fastened to the horns of the enormous Fish. In one case also, it is Vishńu that becomes incarnate, mainly with the purpose of preserving the integrity of the Védas; in the other, it is Brahma, or the 'Lord of all things,' who is mercifully stooping to the level of the creatures for the rescue of his uncorrupted servant.

A third version.

Still the outlines of the legend are precisely the same in both versions; and their close resemblance to each other, and also to the scriptural narrative of the Deluge, has induced a recent critic[1] to conclude that all the knowledge of this subject which Hindus have ever manifested was originally derived from a Semitic source. He has not, however, specified a channel, by which the transfer was likely to be effected; and if his meaning be that some account of the Deluge was first transmitted to the Panjáb in comparatively modern times, the conjecture is not only in itself improbable, but adverse to Hindu traditions. Another of these was happily brought to light a few years ago by the publication of the Yajur-Véda. Appended to it is an ancient commentary, the *Satapat'ha-Bráhmańa*[2], in which the Hindu story of the Deluge is again presented to us in a still simpler dress, and what is worthy of especial notice, accompanied by allusions which imply that A'ryans had themselves referred the Deluge to a high antiquity, and also had retained a glimmering consciousness of some connexion between it and

[1] Burnouf, *Bhâgavata-Pourâna*, Tome III. Pref. pp. xxiii. sq., where the points of divergence between the Puráńic and the Epic legends are fully pointed out.

[2] Weber's *Ind. Stud.* I. 161 sq.

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their migrations from the northern side of the Himálaya.

Version of the Satapa-t'ha Bráh-maṅa.

I am induced to give this legend also in its entirety, that ample means may be afforded for ascertaining what the A'ryan of an early day had handed down to his posterity in reference to the marvels of the Flood, its nature and its consequences:

"One morning the servants of Manu brought him water for ablutions, as the custom is to bring it in our day when men's hands have to be washed. As he proceeded to wash himself he found a fish in the water, which spoke to him, saying, 'Protect me and I will be thy Saviour.' 'From what wilt thou save me?' 'A deluge will ere long destroy all living creatures, but I can save thee from it.' 'What protection, then, dost thou ask of me?' 'So long as we are little,' replied the Fish, 'a great danger threatens us, for one fish will not scruple to devour another. At first, then, thou canst protect me by keeping me in a vase. When I grow bigger, and the vase will no longer hold me, dig a pond, and protect me by keeping me in it; and when I shall have become too large for the pond, then throw me into the sea; for henceforward I shall be strong enough to protect myself against all evils.' The Fish ere long became enormous (*jhasha*), for it grew very fast, and one day it said to Manu, 'In such a year will come the deluge; call to mind the counsel I have given thee; build a ship, and when the deluge comes, embark on the vessel thou hast built, and I will preserve thee.' Manu after feeding and watching the Fish, at last threw it into the sea, and in the very year the Fish had indicated, he prepared a ship and had recourse [in spirit] to his benefactor. When the flood came, Manu went on board the ship. The Fish then reappeared and swam up to him, and Manu passed the cable of his vessel round its horn, by means of which he was transferred across yon Northern Mountain. 'I have saved thee,' said the Fish, 'now lash thy vessel to a tree, else the water may still carry thee away, though thy vessel be moored upon the mountain. When the water has receded, then also mayest thou disembark.' Manu

implicitly obeyed the order, and hence that northern mountain still bears the name of 'Manu's descent[1]' (*Manor avasarpańam*). The deluge swept away all living creatures; Manu alone survived it. His life was then devoted to prayer and fasting in order to obtain posterity. He made the Páka-sacrifice[2]; he offered to the Waters the clarified butter, cream, whey, and curdled milk. His offerings were continued, and at the end of a year he thereby fashioned for himself a wife[3]: she came dripping out of the butter; it trickled on her footsteps. Mitra and Varuńa approached her and asked 'Who art thou?' She answered, 'The daughter of Manu.' 'Wilt thou be our daughter?' 'No:' the answer was, 'My owner is the author of my being.' Their solicitations were all vain; for she moved directly onward till she came to Manu. On seeing her, he also asked her, 'Who art thou?' And she answered, 'Thine own daughter.' 'How so, beloved, art thou really my daughter?' 'Yes; the offerings thou hast made to the Waters, the clarified butter, the cream, the whey, and the curdled milk have brought me into being. I am the completion of thy vows. Approach me during the sacrifice. If so, thou shalt be rich in posterity and in flocks. The desire which thou art cherishing shall be entirely accomplished.' Thus was Manu wedded to her in the midst of the sacrifice, that is, between the ceremonies that denote the opening and the close of it. With her he lived in

[1] In the *Mahábhárata* the name of the mountain is Naubandhana (= 'ship-bond'); and, what is very remarkable, Manu is there supposed to be resident in India when the deluge comes, and to be carried by it as far as Mount Himavat; whereas in this version of the story, it is implied that his original seat was on the *north* of the Himálaya range, and that he crossed over from thence into India (*atidudráva*): see Weber, p. 165.

[2] 'The *Pákayajna*, or sacrifice in which food is offered, implies either the worship of the Viśwadévas, the rites of hospitality, or occasional oblations, or building a house, the birth of a child, or any occasion of rejoicing.' Wilson, *Vish. Pur.*, p. 292, n. 3.

[3] The following passage of the legend is, perhaps, an allegorical embellishment, the idea being that praise (Íďá), the daughter of Manu, is the medium and accomplice by which he was able to bring about the creation of new orders of being. In this manner the present legend is made to harmonize with that in the *Mahábhárata*, where the new creation is said to be achieved by the extraordinary penance of Manu. But the birth of Íďá from the Waters, and the overtures of Mitra and Varuńa (? Day and Night), are still involved in mystery. Cf. Weber, I. 169.

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prayer and fasting, ever-anxious to obtain posterity : and she became the mother of the present race of men which even now is called the race of Manu. The vows which he had breathed in concert with her were all perfectly accomplished."

General inference.

Here again it would be quite superfluous to enlarge upon the shifting and capricious character of the Hindu legend, and still more to specify the points of contact which exist between it and the narrative preserved to us in Holy Scripture. Both these observations will immediately suggest themselves to every reader. But there is another point which, if it be less obvious, is certainly no less deserving of attention. The simplicity of the account in Genesis; the truthful and historic air of every part of it; its close coherence with all other facts of revelation, as well as with the scriptural theory of man and of the universe; the absence from it of those manifest depravations, which are only capable of being rectified and made intelligible when brought into the light which it diffuses, give additional weight to the authority on which it is received by Christians, and vindicate its claim to be regarded as a genuine copy of the old tradition that descended, age by age, from Noah to all members of the sacred family.

§ 4. *Hindu rite of Sacrifice.*

Moral insensibility of the Hindus.

Attention has been drawn already[1] to some characteristics of the Védas, intimating how very low was the degree of moral sensibility once prevalent in the A'ryan tribes of Hindustan. And this remark is further illustrated by the versions of the

[1] Above, pp. 18, 19.

Deluge we have just been criticising. Although the human race, according to Hindu legends, was so utterly overwhelmed that Manu had become the second head and parent of our species, it is obvious, and especially obvious in the oldest form of the tradition, that the moral bearings of the Deluge were comparatively forgotten. It was rather treated as a dire catastrophe, originating in some physical necessities, than as the fruit and punishment of human sin. So far indeed the Buddhist[1] rose superior to the Bráhman. He was clearly conscious that although there *must* be periodic revolutions of the universe, their consequences may be all averted from the individual, who is open to the terrible warnings by which they are preceded. When a *déva* issues forth, according to the legends of Ceylon, arrayed in mourning and with trembling voice and streaming eyes announces, through the various regions doomed to desolation, that in a hundred thousand years the present *kalpa* will be finished, he is also commissioned to declare how every man is able to escape the dread calamity: 'Let him assist his parents, respect his superiors, avoid the five sins, and observe the five obligations.'

Bráhmanical sacrifices.

The Bráhman, however, notwithstanding the dulness of his moral intuitions, had always differed from the Buddhist in the care which he bestowed

[1] See the whole passage in Hardy's *Manual*, pp. 29, 30. 'The beings in the world in great fear approach the *déva*, and ask him whether he has learnt this by his own wisdom, or has been taught it by another; when he replies, that he was sent by Mahá-Brahmá, the *déva* of many ages. On hearing this declaration the men and *dévas* of the earth regard each other with affection, from the fear that comes upon them; by which merit is produced, and they are born in a brahma-loka.'

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Remote antiquity of sacrificial rites.

on the performance of sacrificial rites. There was no period in the life-time of the Indo-A'ryan people when altars were not reared and sacrifices offered[1]. For example, as early as the hymns of the Rig-Véda, men appealed to the abundant blessings which were granted to their forefathers in virtue of the soma-sacrifice. 'O Soma [thus personifying the libation], thy bounties have been all remembered. Thou conductest us along the best of pathways. Under thy protection, O thou whose surname is *Indu* [liquor], our holy and wise ancestors have won the favour of the *dévas*[2].' And, in harmony with this tradition, we noticed how the Hindu legend of the Deluge not only testified to the existence of primeval sacrifices, but extolled their wondrous merit. As Noah, on issuing from the Ark, is said to have built an altar unto the Lord, the Self-existent, that he might propitiate His anger by 'burnt offerings' (Gen. viii. 20—22); so the first anxiety of Manu was to people the earth afresh, by means of prayer and mortification, and still more by what was held to be the grand 'accomplisher of all desires,' by various forms of sacrifice. But though the early prevalence of this rite among the Indo-A'ryans must in future be regarded as indisputable, there remains no small confusion in some quarters with regard to the precise direction and design of the oblations thus presented.

[1] Lassen, I. 789. He urges among other points the existence of the three words *hu* (*dhu*), *θύω*, and Lat. *fio*, which shew that sacrificial rites, and even offerings made by fire, were older than the original dispersion of the Indo-European family.

[2] *Rig-Véda*, Tome I. p. 171, ed. Langlois.

One design of Hindu sacrifices.

1. First, then, it should be remembered, that during the historic period, oblations were seldom or never made to God, the abstract Brahma, excepting where the worshipper had half-unconsciously identified Him with one or other of the elemental deities, with Indra, Agni, Soma, and the like, or else with some illustrious demi-god, the special organ of divinity. In other words, the Hindu offered his material sacrifices not to God, but to the gods[1]. As we behold him pictured in the sacred books of his religion, the objects of his worship differ only in degree, and not in nature, from the worshipper himself. They too are *creatures*, and as such are ultimately doomed to perish in the winding up of all things. And the prevalent ideas of sacrifice entirely corresponded with this low conception of the nature of the beings to whom it was referred. 'By sacrifices the gods are nourished[2].' Rain and fire and sunlight were believed to gather strength and potency proportioned to the size of the oblation, and the fervour of the human spirit. It was, therefore, not so much the feeling of unworthiness, or the intention to deny one's self, that prompted a large class of the Hindu oblations. Man was thoroughly persuaded[3] that the gods were capable of receiving benefit from his services, that they were fed by the abundant products of his field or garden, were exhilarated by the juices

[1] Above, pp. 35, 101—103. Wuttke corroborates the view there taken: 'Nicht zu dem Ur-Brahma steigt das Gebet und der Opferrauch empor, sondern nur zu den dem Menschen ebenbürtigen creatürlichen Göttern:' II. 353.

[2] *Vishńu Pur.* p. 44.

[3] See the passages collected from the Védas in Wuttke, II. 342, 349, and contrast with them Psalm L. 7—15. That worthier views were however subsequently far more common is evident from passages quoted in Bähr, as below, II. 273, 274.

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of the holy soma-plant, were nerved by his impassioned prayers, were solaced by the music of his hymns, and that in recompense for all such acts of piety, the gods became propitious to him: his pastures grew more fertile; his flocks and herds were multiplied; a numerous family gathered round his table, and the foe that threatened to destroy or vex him was more readily circumvented and despatched.

Propitiatory sacrifices.

2. But while such feelings were most prominent in many of the oblations of the ancient A'ryan, he also proved that he was never destitute of those convictions which form the proper basis of the rite of sacrifice; he shewed a sense of personal unworthiness, and a desire of making good his imperfections by offering to God the choicest of his hopes, and sacrificing the best of his possessions. Hence the offerings which he brought were sometimes far more costly and more obviously piacular. As early as the composition of the third Véda, they were all reduced under five heads[1]; (1) *Agnihotra*, burnt offerings, or libations of clarified butter on sacred fire; (2) *Derśapaurńamása*, sacrifices at new and full moon; (3) *Cháturmásya*, sacrifices every four months; (4) *Paśuyajna* or *Aśwamédha*, sacrifice of a horse or other animals; (5) *Soma-yajna*, offerings and libations of the juice of the acid asclepias, or moon-plant. A peculiar virtue was, however, generally ascribed to that one class of sacrifices which, as it involved the strangulation of the

[1] *Vishńu Pur.* p. 275, n. 1: cf. Bähr, *Symbolik des Mosaischen Cultus*, II. 222, 223, who points out, that generally speaking, the unbloody sacrifices were naturally presented to Vishńu, and the bloody sacrifices to Śiva.

subject offered, would run counter to the prejudices of the later A'ryan, who had mastered the ideas arising out of his belief in transmigration. While the other offerings were all mainly eucharistic, these were held to be propitiatory. While in other cases the god worshipped was invited to come down and share the offering with his suppliant, these were all religiously committed to the flames. While others had but little reference to the moral standing of the worshipper, these all derived their meaning from his felt antagonism to powers above him, and his dread of their impending vengeance. While the rest were, for the most part, offered to some individual member of the Hindu pantheon, a sin-offering contemplated the whole group of *dêvas,* and in them, it may be, recognised the majesty of the Supreme Intelligence. 'The worshipper,' it was taught, 'who offers up an animal duly consecrated by Agni and by Soma, is therewith able to buy off all deities at once[1].'

Hindu conviction of unworthiness.

In this conception of the Hindu rite of sacrifice, ascending step by step through various orders of animals, and culminating in the grand oblation of the horse[2], the 'king of sacrifices,' we are able to detect the clearest parallelism to some of the provisions of the Mosaic economy[3]. Animal sacrifice was uniformly prompted by a deep conviction of personal unworthiness, and the necessity in every

[1] See the remarkable extract from the *Aitarêya Bráhmaṅa* in Roth's 'Einleitung' to his edition of the *Nirukta,* p. xxxiii. In the same passage the editor points out the close resemblances between the customs of the early Hindus in slaying their sin-offerings, and the corresponding customs of the Greeks and Romans.

[2] See above, p. 9, n. 11; *Manu,* ch. v. § 39, § 53, ch. XI. § 261; *Rámáyaṅa,* I. 13, ed. Schlegel.

[3] Pt. I. pp. 112, 113.

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worshipper to compensate for his shortcomings and imperfect consecration of himself to God. His life was felt to have been placed in peril, or rather it was wholly forfeited to the Divine Proprietor, whose will he had resisted, and whose laws he had transgressed. He laboured, therefore, by renouncing some of his chief goods, to symbolise and make apparent both to the Divinity and to himself his consciousness of guilt and misery, and, if possible, to clear away the barriers that obstructed his approach to God. Hence also, by a terrible distortion of the rite of sacrifice, had grown the custom of devoting human life itself to the offended *dêvas;* for although there is no public trace of such oblations[1] in the very earliest period of Hindu religion, the revolting spectacle was seen at last, and was repeated by some barbarous and fanatic spirits from that day to our own.

Sacrifice according to the philosophers.

3. On the other hand, the teaching of the earnest and enlightened A'ryans had been deflecting more and more from the revealed idea of substitutive

[1] Above, p. 18, and n. 3. It may be mentioned, in addition to the paper of Prof. Wilson's there referred to, that Roth has also examined the remarkable legend of Śunahśépa (Weber's *Ind. Stud.* I. 457 sq., II. 112 sq.), and that he regards it as proving the existence of human sacrifices at an early period. 'Als Mittelpunkt der Sage in dieser Form erscheint offenbar die Rettung Çunahçepa's vom Opfertode, ihre nächste Beziehung ist also die religiös-sittliche, gerichtet gegen den Gräuel des Menschenopfers. So mag denn diese Legende, die einzige indische der Art, für das brahmanische Volk dieselbe Bedeutung gehabt haben, wie die Sage von Iphigenia oder von Phrixos für die Hellenen, die von Abraham und Isaak für das hebräische Alterthum. Die Aehnlichkeiten in einzelnen Zügen liessen sich manche namhaft machen: es möge genügen darauf hinzuweisen, dass die indische Erzählung für den dem Tode entzogenen Menschen keinen Ersatz auf dem Altare selbst eintreten lässt: die Bitte um Gnade genügt um das Gräuliche schlechthin aufzuheben.' In later times the offering of human victims was generally confined to the worshippers of Śiva, and his wife Kálí or Durgá.

suffering. They laboured to effect their own recovery without the intervention of a Mediator. Sacrifices might, indeed, be offered, and might possibly appease the wrath of some inferior *déva*, but the only offering which philosophy could stamp with its approval, was the conscious dedication of the individual spirit to the Spirit of the universe. According, therefore, to these doctors, the whole life of man must be a great oblation of himself, intended to promote his absolute deliverance from the fetters of the selfish and the natural. Exactly in proportion as he continues to possess an individual being[1], he is broken off from God, he is encompassed with infirmities, he is the victim of his appetites, the slave of his affections, and as such, abandoned to the powers of evil. Hence wherever this conception was fully realised, the form of man's devotion was most rigorous and ascetical. Though 'suitable acts of expiation had been enjoined by the great sages for every kind of crimes[2],' they all were far from satisfying the rules of penance which the ardent devotee was willing to impose upon himself. The proper sacrifice, he urged, is that which, springing from an utter abnegation of the individual, aims at nothing short of God and self-annihilation.

[1] The following extract from the *Probodha-Chandrodaya* (ed. Goldstücker, p. 55) will serve to illustrate the whole subject: 'Wenn sie den Höchsten in Banden legten, den Einigen zur Vielheit theilten und den ewigen Herrscher in körperliches Dasein warfen und zu der Stufe der Sterblichkeit brachten, so werde ich eine Busse vollbringen, die dem Leben dieser Brahmatheiler ein Ende macht und ihn wieder zu seiner Einheit führt.'

[2] *Vishńu Pur.* p. 210. Yet in accordance with the laxer principles of the Puranic age, and of the Hindu sectaries, it was finally maintained that 'reliance upon Krishńa is far better than any such expiatory acts as religious austerity and the like.' Remembrance of Hari (Vishńu) is said to be the 'best of all expiations.' *Ib.*

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§ 5. *The Hindu hope of restoration.*

How far the Hindu expected an historical Saviour.

The grand idea of an historic Saviour, entering once for all into the line of humanity, and once for all achieving its redemption by the offering of Himself to God, was utterly unknown to every class of ancient A'ryans. Sacrifices may have taught men the imperative need of some such intervention, and may further have suggested the conception of some Victim higher than the cows and horses which they strangled, and more holy than the holiest *yogin* who consumed his life in penance and austerities; but the actual course of Hindu thought was rather tending to diminish than increase the keenness of these cravings and the force of these suggestions. While the many had been more and more disposed to acquiesce in a routine of ceremonial observances, relying for the rest on some particular *déva*, whom they specially selected for their patron; the philosopher had grown more confident of his resources, and more daring in his efforts to mount upward on the wings of knowledge and asceticism, and consummate his fellowship with God. Yet notwithstanding all these wayward tendencies, diverging, each in opposite ways, from principles of true religion, there was always in the heart of man a yearning after some external Saviour; there was always a presentiment that such a Saviour would eventually stoop down from heaven, and by an act of grace and condescension master all our deadliest foes, and reinstate us in our lost inheritance.

This dim and elementary idea, pointing to a future *religatio* of the human and Divine, and so

pervading all systems of religion, was especially manifest in the traditions of Hindus respecting the descent of God to earth in various forms of creaturely existence. I have already drawn attention to the legend of the Deluge, where, according to one version of it, Brahmá, and, according to another, Vishńu, is said to have appeared as an enormous Fish, in order to promote the welfare of his righteous follower, and preserve the continuity of the human species. Other legends bring before us different kinds of *avatáras*, where the rescue of mankind from the dominion of malignant spirits is no less conspicuous. Earth herself complains[1] how she is reeling under the vast load of guilt and wretchedness, yet her complaints are all eventually carried to Vishńu, who comforts her by the assurance that her wrongs shall be redressed and all her enemies brought to shame and silence. The hope of such emancipation is, we saw, most formally expressed in recent versions of the Krishńa-legend. There a series of periodic interventions in behalf of man is definitely asserted, while the object contemplated by them is no less distinctly said to be a *moral* object,—the suppression of impiety, the protection of the good, and the establishment of duty[2].

The Kalki-avatára:

But, as if to satisfy us that the faith of the Hindu in champions of his own devising was extremely feeble at the best, we see him ready to abandon them and willing to accept a novel incarnation of Vishńu, whose advent is still future. For example, in the close of the Kali-yuga, when the world, relapsing more and more into impiety,

[1] *Asiatic Res.* x. 27. [2] Above, p. 113.

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has reached the brink of annihilation, the Hindu expects a fresh deliverer, human both in form and aspect, seated on a white horse, and armed with a destructive scythe. To him will be awarded the eight faculties[1] which constituted man's original perfection: he will also be a genuine 'portion of Brahma,' 'the Beginning and the End[2].' 'By his irresistible might he will destroy all the *mléchchas* and thieves, and all whose minds are devoted to iniquity. He will then re-establish righteousness upon earth; and the minds of those who live at the end of the Kali-age shall be awakened, and shall be as pellucid as crystal. The men who are thus changed by virtue of that peculiar time shall be as the seeds of human beings, and shall give birth to a race who shall follow the laws of the Krita age, or age of purity[3].' Yet the modern origin of documents in which this legend is preserved, as well as its position in the series of Hindu *avatáras*, and the glaring contradiction which it offers to older representations of the sacred books in reference to the yuga-system, all require us to place it in an age far subsequent to the diffusion of the Gospel. On the other hand, the manifest resemblances which it exhibits to some visions of the Apocalypse will as clearly justify us in imputing its origin to Gnostic, if not Christian, influence[4]; an identification fatal to the cavils of a

its probable origin.

[1] Above, p. 136, n. 2.

[2] *Vishńu Pur.* p. 484.

[3] *Ibid.* Cf. Lüken *Traditionen*, p. 320.

[4] 'Der Kalkin insbesondere mit seinem weissen Rosse ist schwerlich eine indische Erfindung, da er dem Yugasystem, welches am Ende *jedes* Kaliyuga eine *Zerstörung* der Welt verlangt oder wenigstens verlangen sollte, direkt widerspricht, erklärt sich dagegen vortrefflich aus den ähnlichen Vorstellungen der Gnostiker.' Weber, *Ind. Stud.* II. 411.

modern rationalist, who, after citing the Kalki-legend with an air of triumph, goes on to tell us that 'the Jews have the same belief,' but that 'with them it is an after-thought.' The truth is that so far from being either secondary or derived, the expectation of a Christ, all-righteous and all-merciful, a Christ in whom all nations of the earth may find a blessing, was imprinted on the heart and memory of the Hebrew people from the time of Abraham: it was the pivot of their firmest hopes, it was the key to all their Scriptures.

CHAPTER IV.

Contrasts in the general development of Hinduism and Revealed Religion.

'In the present impure age, the bud of wisdom being blighted by iniquity, men are unable to apprehend pure unity.'—HINDU PHILOSOPHER.

'Ημῖν δὲ ἀπεκάλυψεν ὁ Θεὸς διὰ τοῦ Πνεύματος αὐτοῦ.—ST PAUL.

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Abraham contrasted with some ancient A'ryan.

1. IF one were asked to single out the main criterion by which patriarchs, like Abraham, may be distinguished from the A'ryan chief, whose portrait is preserved among the oldest hymns of the Rig-Véda, it would turn far less upon the difference in their mental organisation and their outward forms of worship, than on sentiments by which that organisation was directed and those forms of worship were upheld. The men to be contrasted are both primitive and simple-hearted. Both are nomades, far inferior, it may be, to their descendants in the strength and clearness of their intellectual powers, though more than equal in poetic sensibility; collecting wisdom as they move from spot to spot in search of regular modes of life and permanent habitations. The wealth of each is in his flocks and herds; his strength in the devotion of his clansmen and posterity. Both are also conscious of their moral wants, and their dependence on superior genii; both are men of praise, of prayer, of sacrifice. And yet how very different are the aspects

of their inner life, the real character of their religious worship, their relations to the world invisible.

The faith of the Hebrew patriarch.

The father of the Hebrew race, as we behold him in the Book of Genesis, abandoning his paternal roof, and then encamping, year by year, beneath a foreign sky, is ever influenced by the consciousness of supernatural guidance. The arm on which he leans is that of the Omnipotent. The Lord Himself is with him in the course of his migrations: his misgivings are all hushed when he reflects that God, the Self-Existent, is his shield, and his exceeding great reward (Gen. xv. 1). The patriarch, in other words, has such a faith in God as justifies his claim to be a Christian by anticipation, 'the father of the faithful.' That organ of the soul by which we realize as present what is actually beyond the range of human vision, was in him directed to the object where alone it can be satisfied. The God of Abraham was living, personal, ever-present, irresistible, no cold Abstraction of the logical faculty, no distant Something which could only be defined by negatives, but a willing Friend, a righteous Judge, a sympathetic Father. Abraham's road may lie along the trackless plain or the inhospitable mountain-side, and yet he fears no evil: his trust is in a living God and Guardian, who will never fail His own. He may be called to suffer, but he suffers at the hands of One who will convert the scourge itself into an instrument of blessing. He may have to sacrifice the fairest of his earthly prospects, yet he knows to whom the sacrifice is made. He wanders childless in the land of promise, yet as often as he gazes up

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to heaven, he welcomes in the stars that spangle the unclouded firmament, an image of his own posterity. Abraham 'believed in the Lord; and He counted it to him for righteousness' (Gen. xv. 6).

The Indo-A'ryan, on the other hand, had no such faith in God, and no such trust in His protection. Indisposed to love God, he was equally unwilling to retain God in his knowledge. In proportion as he left his Father's house to wander forth in quest of this or that debasing pleasure, faith was dimmed and paralysed within him, till the thought of a supreme Intelligence, distinct from matter and transcending all material processes, had well-nigh vanished from his soul. Instead of finding peace in God, he vainly sought it in the adoration or deprecation of the elements; and having abandoned himself to this inferior kind of worship, he oscillated from one *déva* to another, but had real faith in none.

It is indeed remarkable, that the efficacy of a principle analogous to Christian faith was never plainly recognised in India till after the propagation of the Gospel[1]. Then it was that the idea began to shew itself in one particular Hindu sect, where men adopted phraseology which might have been mistaken almost for the language of the early Church. They spoke of worshipping God in spirit: they ascribed a wonderful significance to faith (*bhakti*); yet even this new verity was in the end so much distorted, that the spurious 'faith' of India had become no better than a cloke for heartless apathy or gross licentiousness. Belief in one particular *déva*, or a firm reliance on the merit of

[1] See Lassen, II. 1096, 1099, and above, p. 90.

some special *avatára*, would, according to this system, obviate the need of virtue, and would sanctify all kinds of vice[1].

The moral superiority of the Hebrew patriarch.

How different was the faith of Abraham! It did not terminate in *dévas* like Vishńu or Śiva, Krishńa or Gańésa: and the object being raised indefinitely higher, and invested with distinctly moral attributes, the principle of faith had also gained a corresponding elevation. 'I am the Almighty God: walk before me, and be thou perfect' (Gen. xvii. 1). Such was the original basis of the covenant which brought the patriarch into a new relationship with God. The Being whom he worshipped was not only righteous, but was righteousness itself. He was no local deity with limited jurisdiction or with human partialities. He was the Judge of all the earth (Gen. xviii. 25): and to impress this grand idea on Abraham and his posterity was the uniform design of all the elder revelation. The satisfying of men's intellectual cravings was but secondary and subordinate, compared with the enlivening of their conscience, the rectifying of their wishes, and the purification of their heart. The will of man, as one essential organ needed for the due appropriation of Divine know-

[1] Elphinstone, pp. 98, 121, and Wilson, *Lectures*, p. 31. The latter of these authorities, who has enlarged upon the question in his *History of the Hindu Sects*, remarks that by teaching the doctrine of 'faith alone,' the Hindu sectarian has rendered conduct 'wholly immaterial.' 'It matters not how atrocious a sinner may be, if he paints his face, his breast, his arms, with certain sectarial marks; or, which is better, if he brands his skin permanently with them with a hot iron stamp; if he is constantly chanting hymns in honour of Vishńu; or, what is equally efficacious, if he spends hours in the simple reiteration of his name or names; if he die with the word Hari, or Ráma, or Krishńa, on his lips, and the thought of him in his mind, he may have lived a monster of iniquity,—he is certain of heaven.'

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ledge, as one leading element in the spiritual constitution of our race, was made in Hebraism the subject of a special education: it was moulded step by step into conformity with the will of God. He asked the patriarch and his descendants whether, with the knowledge of Him which they had already, they would still believe in Him, and follow Him as their supreme Director, even though His path might sometimes be mysterious, and the truths He taught them might sound harsh and paradoxical. And the effect of this divine economy is clearly seen from day to day in Abraham himself. The patriarch can never be indifferent for example to his earthly prospects and position; for the present world to him is not a 'vast mirage' of unsubstantial phantoms, but is full of deep realities. He longs for offspring, he aspires to see his family in possession of the land of Canaan; yet whenever God appears to be rescinding the original promise, Abraham as often bows to the decision, and resigns his own will to the will of God: and when at last old age is creeping over him and he is still like one who sojourns in a strange country, and must buy himself a sepulchre, his walk with God continues to uphold and purify him; he can look more clearly through the temporal promise to the principles which underlie it; the postponement first, and then the partial realization of it, teach him to reflect more deeply on some brighter and enduring heritage; and his spirit being thus exalted to a closer converse with the things invisible, he dies, as he has lived,—in faith.

On the other hand, it seems as though the Indo-A'ryan were far less susceptible of moral

culture, and that culture far more seriously retarded by the rank luxuriance of his other powers, the vividness of his imagination, and the acuteness of his speculative faculty. 'In the hymns of the Véda, we see man left to himself to solve the riddle of the world[1].' As soon as he relinquishes the primary faith in God, he dooms himself to wander without light or guidance in the midst of endless mazes, and to struggle with gigantic and insoluble enigmas. Nay, the obscuration has extended far and deep into the spiritual province of his nature. He is 'alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in him, because of the blindness of his heart.' The oracle of conscience may still speak indeed, but its decisions are continually disputed and rejected. The monitor within him, his own inmost self, may raise its frequent protest in behalf of righteousness, and drive him to invoke the help of Indra, or the mercy of the purifying Waters; yet he finds in them no real and abiding comfort; he is tempted to resign himself afresh to the dominion of the power of darkness, and to give up the battle of humanity for lost.

The hopeful spirit of the Hebrew patriarch.

Abraham, 'believing Him faithful that promised,' was conspicuous also as a man of hope, of large ideas, of glowing aspirations. He shewed himself most conscious of his noble destiny; he realized, as few had done before, the glories which had been reserved for all adherents of the true religion. He saw the day of the Messiah; he saw it, and was glad. Directed by the light of the prophetic spirit, he beheld not only the detention of his children's children in a land that was not

[1] Prof. Max Müller, in Bunsen's *Phil. of Univ. Hist.* I. 134.

theirs, and their eventual recovery from bondage after a definite term of years (Gen. xv. 13, 14), but also their migration to the land of promise, the commencement of some Hebrew dynasty, and last of all the advent of *the* Son of Abraham, in whom all nations of the earth are blessed. We ought not, doubtless, to exaggerate the area of his field of vision, nor represent him as possessed of all those truths which, after the diffusion of a perfect light, we may discover in the oldest version of the Gospel-promise. The reality itself may be as different in degree from aught which Abraham anticipated, as the future glory of the Christian may transcend the imagery by means of which he now approximates to some idea of it. Still Abraham was in his day the champion of the ancient faith; and as he wandered far and near and saw the nations lapsing one by one into idolatry and creature-worship, he could hardly fail to understand that the election of his family, as the family of God, was for some high and holy purpose, that the basis of the covenant was a moral basis, and that He, in whom the stock of Abraham would finally put forth its choicest branch and reach its highest glory, was to spread the blessings of this covenant in all the scattered tribes of man.

But where in any of the Védas can we find a parallel to this patient trust in God, this glowing hope of an imperishable kingdom? There were echoes, it may be, confused, and often contradictory echoes of the primitive condemnation of man's tempter; and as evil seemed to propagate itself from age to age, and as the malice of the demons grew still more intolerable, earnest hearts would

grope, despairing of all human saviours, for a God of truth, of holiness, of mercy: yet oft as heathendom put forth these dim presentiments, and fondly as it clung to these half-conscious prophecies of redemption, it was never able to decipher[1] them until the promise was in fact fulfilled, and meaning was imported into them by the announcements of the Gospel. The heart had always striven in the direction of Christianity, but never till the advent of the Saviour was that striving made intelligible even to itself.

Contrast extended to religious systems.

Now the contrast here exhibited between the father of the faithful and the more elevated of those A'ryan colonists who chanted in their first migrations the impassioned hymns of the Rig-Véda, is in general true of the religious systems under which the Hebrew and Hindu were being educated. In the one we have stability, in the other, fluctuation; in the one, development, in the other, discontinuity; in the one, progress, in the other, retrogression. In the first, the Object of belief entirely fills the spirit of the worshipper, He is the same yesterday, to-day and for ever; in the second, the divinities all change, or vanish in the lapse of ages; they are 'old' and 'young[2],' are less and greater, this supplanting or eclipsing that, and all extinguishable by the very law of their existence. Moreover, out of Abraham there grew a family which proved itself the champion of monotheism, and which acted as the shelter of the

[1] 'The universal heart of mankind, from out of the depths, invoked the presence of the Restorer, though it would not read its own involuntary prophecy.' Archer Butler, *Sermons*, 1st series, p. 241.

[2] The Védas themselves distinguish between the great gods and the less, between the young gods and the old. Wilson, *Rig-Véda*, I. 71.

purest forms of worship and the guardian of the oracles of God. That family in spite of all adverse influences was one and indestructible: it stood in reference to the world at large as stood the sacred ark of Noah in the midst of the avenging waters. It surmounted all the storms and fluctuations of all ages; it carried in its bosom the beginnings of a new creation, and the germs of supernatural life that should hereafter leaven all the mass of humanity.

Continuity of true religion.

As centuries revolved, the creed of that sacred family had doubtless grown more definite and luminous; the measure of man's light was greater, and his knowledge of his future destiny more certain and explicit; but the several steps by which these vast accessions were produced are all apparent in the marvellous annals of the Hebrew people. So far from standing in a line with heathenism, so far from borrowing its distinctive properties from any or from all the Gentile systems, the religion of the Old Testament, if we believe its own assertions and denunciations, was from first to last in diametric opposition to them. They were from beneath; it was from above. They all were issuing from the brain and heart of man; they varied with the variations of his temperament and with the growth of intellectual culture; it was the result of an objective revelation, which, coming down immediately from God, was radiant with the light of His perfection and was based upon relations between God and man which neither time nor space can modify. As early as the patriarchal period it was taught how every ethnic system would be finally superseded; how the 'Shiloh'

would inherit all the royalty of Judah, and how Gentiles would all flock to Him for light, for shelter, for nutrition. And when Christianity was actually established it was far from disappointing these anticipations of the ancient world. It grew out of that anterior system, as the ripening flower unfolds itself organically from the bud, or as the daylight is the natural sequence of the dawn. The Church of God has not been planted on the ruins of the old theocracy, but is its proper consummation. The Son of Abraham is now the Prince of Peace and King of Glory, and all 'who are Christ's are Abraham's seed and heirs according to the promise.'

New points of comparison.

2. Nor if special features of the Hebrew and Hindu systems be compared in chronological order, shall we often find that the alleged resemblances between them are more than superficial; provided only that our estimate of revealed religion is based entirely on original and authentic documents. This proviso is the more important, since analogies far deeper *do* exist, as we shall see hereafter, between the genuine creeds of Hindustan and certain depravations of revealed truth as it was first communicated. It might be urged, for instance, with considerable plausibility that Bráhmanism, in reference to the general course of its development, will stand to Buddhism in the same relation that Mosaism stands to Christianity; or, in other words, that if we place the principles enunciated in the Védas and the Laws of Manu side by side with those contained in the Old Testament, and if we place the principles of Gautama side by side with those of Christ and the Apostles, the comparison

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will lead us to infer some inward, if not outward and historical affinity, between the different systems of belief. These questions both demand a more particular examination.

Bráhmanism how far analogous to Hebraism.

(1) First, then, Bráhmanism was but a secondary stage in the formation of the Indo-A'ryan institutions. It appears to have adapted to the wants of nations what before had been restricted to the family, the clan, the disconnected tribe. In this respect the office of Mosaism was not only analogous but identical. Both, in order to effect such purpose, had engrafted new elements upon the worship of the previous period; both had multiplied the number of sacrificial rites, and, while reviving many of the ordinances which had the sanction of the former generations[1], fresh importance seems to have been given to ritual uniformity, as though in that peculiar phase of human progress, the language of symbolic action was peculiarly expressive and intelligible. But while I grant the perfect truth of all such representations, the objector needs to be reminded that the moral system of the Hebrews was meanwhile indefinitely superior to that of popular Hinduism. The institutes of Moses added, it may be, to what had formerly prevailed; they authorised a far more solemn and elaborate liturgy; but, unlike the institutes of Manu, they insisted at the same time more emphatically on the need of spirituality in the worshipper: the tone of every interdict and admonition grew more penetrating and severe. 'Will I eat the flesh of bulls, or drink the blood of goats? Offer unto God thanksgiving; and

[1] Cf. Blunt's *Undesigned Coincidences*, pp. 8 sq. Lond. 1847.

pay thy vows unto the Most High; and call upon Me in the day of trouble : I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify Me. But unto the wicked God saith, What hast thou to do, to declare My statutes, or that thou shouldest take My covenant in thy mouth?' (Ps. L. 13—16). The symbols of the Hebrew law were thus far more than barren and unmeaning ceremonies: they suggested to the worshipper a multitude of deep and spiritual relations. Man was taught to separate the visible imagery under which divine things were brought down more fully to his present understanding from ideas and principles enveloped in them, and especially to hear the doctrine of the unity, the placability, the holiness, and the supremacy of God, proclaimed in every chapter of their ritual institute.

Hereditary priesthood.

Again, the system, re-enacted under Moses, like that which owed its birth to Manu, had a powerful and hereditary priesthood, whose prerogatives were guarded by a list of stringent prohibitions. None but they could minister in holy things. Yet here, in spite of all apparent similarities, the difference is essential and extreme. The Hebrew legislator had most plainly recognised the unity of the human race : he gave no sanction to the law of caste, by which the Bráhman had been lifted far above his fellows, not in office only but extraction and inherent worth. The son of Aaron was an ordinary Israelite; he was descended from an ordinary member of the patriarchal family,—no emanation from the head or reason of Brahmá, while others were the offspring of the feet. And, as the consequence of this original equality, the high-priest of the Hebrews, though invested with

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superior rank and ministering before God, not only for himself but also in behalf of other men, had never shewn a disposition to invade the privileges of his brethren. His official dignity was felt to be compatible with the sacerdotal character of every Israelite, who, owing to his moral elevation and particularly to his knowledge of the one True God, had always been a member of a 'royal priesthood,' and a 'prophet for all mankind[1].' Accordingly the insight into heavenly mysteries, and access to 'the oracles of God,' had never been confined, among the Hebrews, to one narrow circle, or one favoured class. The many were not left to gather up such crumbs and fragments of religious truth as chanced to fall from the abundant table of some haughty doctor like the Bráhman. The provisions of the Law had rendered it possible for every one to know the will of God, and make it known to others; and each father, in pursuance of this principle, was urged to teach his children, 'to the intent that when they came up they might shew their children the same.'

Narrowness of range.

The point, however, which is more especially insisted on by those who institute comparisons between the Hebrew and Bráhmanic systems is the partial and exclusive spirit manifest in both. That narrowness, indeed, may fairly be ascribed to every aspect of the latter system, no one has yet ventured to dispute. Its very constitution was harsh and inelastic. It knew of no expansion beyond the members of the three superior ('twice-born') classes; for the śúdra, though reduced by the victorious arm of the invader and associated

[1] See Part I. p. 107, n. 1.

with the rest in the capacity of a serf, was held to be excluded, by impurity of descent, from all acquaintance with the Védas[1] and from other like advantages. But can the same exclusiveness be fairly charged against the Hebrews and their system? Doubtless one great object of it was to fence them in from the contamination of the neighbouring heathen, and by educating them apart to render them a single and peculiar people; yet there never was a period in their history when they were treated as a higher and distinct 'race' of beings, or the proselyte rejected from communion with the genuine Hebrew. Men, for instance, like the Kenites or the Rechabites, retaining the ancestral faith in one True God without conforming to the ritual law of Moses, lived for centuries on terms of amity with Israel and were sheltered near the sanctuary of God. The psalmist and the prophet are both heard exulting in the thought that Sion was the home and mother-city not of Israel only, but of gentile nations also. At the dedication of the temple Solomon did not forget the 'strangers' coming out of far countries to worship in Jerusalem. They also were embraced within the circle of his prayer; 'That all people of the earth may know Thy name, to fear Thee, as do Thy people Israel' (1 Kings viii. 43). And as the number of such proselytes went on increasing, the energy of Hebraism itself would be recruited by admixtures from the heathen world. The single difference in point of expansibility between the Christian and Hebrew systems lay in this;—that under the more perfect institution converts are relieved from the necessity

[1] See above, p. 29, n. 2.

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of compliance with the ancient ritual, on the ground that man, exalted by incorporation into Christ, is now attaining his majority,—is capable of higher and more spiritual forms of education. Still it should not be forgotten that nothing would at first conduce more largely to the spread of Christian influences than the existence of those Jewish proselytes in every district both of east and west. They served as starting-points for missions to the heathen; they were links, or rather living stones made ready in the providence of God for binding all the world together, and for building up a Catholic Church.

Buddhism how far analogous to Christianity.

(2) But, secondly, do other and more obvious points of similarity exist between the general aspects of Buddhism and those of Christianity? Was Buddhism, for example, in its main particulars the offspring of an older system? Christianity was also this, but with the grand distinction that it never for one moment ceased to venerate the holy writings and traditions of its predecessor; whereas Buddhism entered on the work of revolution by rejecting or contemning the authority of the Védas. Or, did Buddhism labour to emancipate the ancient world from the dominion of an irksome and elaborate ritual? Christianity has in turn effected this emancipation; not, however, by the violent uprooting of the older forms of service, but by placing in the very centre of its dogmatic system the reality which they foreshadowed, and thus elevating and refining the whole character of worship. Or, again, did Buddhism venture to repudiate every species of animal sacrifice? The Gospel did the same, but in obedience to a very

different theory both of God and man. So far from questioning the truth of instincts which had found expression in the ancient sacrifices, it was ever pointing to 'the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world:' it taught men how the offering of all other victims was eclipsed and superseded not by the development of human reason or the riper dictates of philosophy, but 'through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.' Did Buddhism lay unwonted stress on ethics? Christianity did the same, but building on a true foundation, all the lessons which it inculcated were sustained by deep and heavenly motives; they grew directly out of its theology, deriving thence their highest virtue and most touching illustration. To be good is, in the moral system of the Christian, to be God-like: while in Buddhism, where the thought of the Creator and the Judge is virtually rejected, the moral code itself is stripped of its supreme authority. Or was Buddhism from the first distinguished by the feminine mildness of its tone, the gentleness of its demeanour, the diffusiveness of its philanthropy? These crowning excellencies of the heathen system were again transcended by the genial spirit of Christianity; for though it has distinctly recognised the freedom of the human agent, and so carried its appeal directly to the manlier province of our being, it has taught men with unequalled emphasis to put away 'all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamour and evil speaking, with all malice,' and has charged them to be 'kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God, for Christ's sake, hath forgiven them.' Or, lastly, did

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the followers of the Buddha rise at length to the conception of an ever-widening empire, and embark on the conversion of far-distant nations? Have their tenets been in fact accepted, not by Hindus only, but by countless multitudes in China and Tibet, and still more recently by Japanese and Burman, Mongol and Malay? The Gospel in like manner claims to be a 'world religion.' It has never faltered in that claim since He, whose errand was to rescue and restore humanity, commissioned the small band of Galilæan peasants to go forth into the world and 'preach the Gospel to every creature.' By the majesty and life inherent in the Gospel it has subjugated, step by step, the first, the mightiest, the most highly-gifted nations; and although, in some localities, the tide of conquest has receded and the vantage-ground been lost, the course of Christianity was on the whole triumphant and progressive. Every year is adding largely to the proofs already given of supernatural vigour, and indefinite expansibility: and thus the Gospel is, in fact, what Buddhism vainly strove to be,—*the* agent in the hands of God for working the regeneration of the human family[1].

Real coincidences between India and the West.

Yet, while I would contend that most of the alleged resemblances between the spirit which pervades the Bible on the one side, and the Hindu *sûtras* on the other, are but slight and superficial, I am far from saying that no analogies whatever can

[1] It is melancholy to hear a weak and half-infatuated writer of the present day, in discussing the great question, *What is Truth?* (Lond. 1856) complain of 'the partial littleness, the narrowness of conception, and circumscribed application of our Christian invention, and the isolated instances of beneficence exhibited in the ministry of Christ,' as compared with the Buddhist's 'sublime picture of an exulting universe,' &c., p. 156.

be traced in the historical development of the religions we are now comparing. What, then, is the general nature of these points of contact? I answer: they are, for the most part, not discoverable in the genuine dogmas of revealed religion, but in later depravations of it,—not in Hebraism as founded on the ancient Scriptures, and embodied in the temple-service, not in Christianity as once for all delivered by the Lord and His Apostles to the keeping of the early Church, but in some schools and systems, drawing their original life from these, but leavened and corrupted by other elements of foreign or extrinsic growth.

Root of such resemblances.

Nor will the bare existence of such resemblances be matter of surprise to him who soberly reflects upon the way in which they are produced. As soon as ever the mind of man is anxious to break loose from what is supernaturally revealed; as soon as ever the authority within him is suffered to resist and overrule the authority without him, he at once relapses, in the same proportion, to a state of nature: the religious system he constructs is so far standing on a level with heathenism; and whenever such internal affinity has been established[1]

[1] See above, p. 86, n. 3. Quinet (*Le Génie des Religions*, pp. 215, 216, Paris, 1851) appears to have been startled by the discovery of some of the resemblances between Buddhism and the Romanism of the Middle Ages:—'On reste d'ailleurs confondu en voyant comment, à travers toutes les différences de temps et de lieu, la même empreinte spirituelle a produit, dans le catholicisme du moyen âge et dans le bouddhisme de la haute Asie, des institutions, des mœurs, des singularités, si parfaitement semblables qu'on croirait l'Orient et l'Occident plagiares l'un de l'autre. Dans les légendes des bouddhistes de Ceylan, comme dans les chroniques des monastères de Cîteaux et de Saint-Gall, ce ne sont que fondations de couvents d'hommes ou de femmes, missions chez les peuples étrangers, pélerinages, bénédictions de reliques, indulgences, prédications, conciles œcuméniques pour combattre les schismes, extirper l'hérésie, main-

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there is reason to expect, in cases even where no outward agents are at work, a general similarity between the tenets of two independent doctors, and, it may be, in the structure of their sacred institutions.

Essenism.

I shall notice one or two examples. Of the three great sects who figured in Judæa at the close of the Old-Testament economy, one of the most remarkable was the confraternity of the Essenes; which, though entirely Jewish in its main complexion, may remind us here and there not only of Pythagoras and the 'Polistæ,' but of Gautama Buddha and his school[1]. There is the same mystic glow upon the spiritual life of the Essene. Repelled and wearied by the frigid ritualism of the Pharisee, and disgusted by the selfishness and scepticism of the Sadducee, his feelings had impelled him to withdraw entirely from the town; he lost his reverence for the temple-service, he endeavoured to arrive at fuller knowledge of the things of God by analysing his own emotions. Meanwhile, however, he was not a mere recluse, inactive, meditative, and unpractical. He saw in every human

tenir l'orthodoxie.' On some of the points here cited, see Appendix II.

[1] A late writer, (Mr J. H. Gouldhawke,) in his extravagant production, *The Solar Allegories*, Calcutta, 1855, attempts to prove that 'the greater number of personages mentioned in the Old and New Testaments are allegorical beings.' He has also laboured to connect the philosophy of the Essenes with that of the Pythagoreans and Hindu philosophers (p. 20); and in particular traces back the growth of Christian monasticism to influences diffused by them and their associates in the schools of Alexandria. Neander, in considering a similar objection, has admitted (*Life of Christ*, p. 40, London, 1851) that the sect of the Essenes, though strictly Jewish in its origin, contained within it some infusion of Oriental theosophy, but is at the same time very careful to point out the fundamental contradiction between the special principles of Essenism and those of Christianity.

being the image of the one Creator; he abhorred all forms of slavery; he was ardently desirous to promote the moral and material interests of his fallen countrymen. But here, as in the case of Buddhism, while attempting to remodel and regenerate, the Essene abandoned his belief not only in the errors and extravagances of other sects, but in some vital principles of true religion. He estranged himself from the divine society where God was more immediately present. The spirit which he more and more betrayed was, in the language of Neander, 'monkish and schismatic.' Like the Buddhist he believed in some arbitrary and irrevocable fate[1], necessitating human action. Like the Buddhist also he repudiated the ancient doctrine of mediation, propitiation and redemption, by disparaging, if not abjuring, the rite of sacrifice, in which that doctrine was embodied; and thus, in spite of all the amiability and gentleness of his nature, we hear of no Essenes among the little company of Hebrews 'who first trusted in Christ.'

Early Christian heresies.

Or, take again the swarm of heresies that soon invaded almost every province of the early Church. Abandoning, as they did, the more essential of the supernatural truths of revelation, they were virtually and in effect revivals of paganism; and family-likeness may accordingly be traced among the older speculations current in the schools of heathen philosophy. In discussing, for example, the nature of the Divine Sonship, Sabellius and

[1] Τὸ δὲ τῶν 'Εσσηνῶν γένος, πάντων τὴν εἱμαρμένην κυρίαν ἀποφαίνεται, καὶ μηδὲν ὃ μὴ κατ' ἐκείνης ψῆφον ἀνθρώποις ἀπαντᾷ. Joseph. *Antiq.* XVII. V. 9, ed. Havercamp.

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his party taught a doctrine very similar to that already noticed in the *trimúrrti* of India; while Docetism, starting from a notion that the spiritual and material cannot permanently coexist, had merely reproduced the Hindu doctrine of *avatáras.* The inward correspondence in the texture of ideas had issued in a similar depravation of revealed truth.

Monasticism;

Or if, penetrating below the surface, we investigate the elementary thoughts and feelings that hereafter found an utterance in monastic institutions of the Church, we find that on the one side those ideas are alien from the spirit of primitive Christianity, and on the other that they had been long familiar in the east before they were appropriated or unconsciously reproduced among one class of Christians in Syria and Egypt. India was the real birthplace of monasticism[1], its cradle being in the haunts of earnest *yogins* and self-torturing devotees, who were convinced that evil is inherent not in man only but in all the various forms of matter, and accordingly withdrew as far as possible from contact with the outer world[2]. At first indeed the Christian hermit like the earliest of his Hindu prototypes had dwelt alone upon the outskirts of his native town or village, supporting himself by manual labour and devoting all the surplus of his earnings to religious purposes. But during the fourth century of the present

[1] Prof. Wilson, in *Asiat. Res.* XVI. 38. See also Mr Hardy's *Eastern Monachism,* and M. Pavie's critique on it in the *Revue des Deux Mondes,* 1854, Tome V. 'The type of those devotees,' writes Mr H. T. Prinsep, (*Tibet,* p. 150, Lond. 1852,) 'who practised penances and sat on pillars, like Simeon Stylites,' are still found at Koon-boom and in Tibet.

[2] See above, p. 72.

era many such hermits began to flock together in the forest or the wilderness, where regular confraternities were organised upon a model more or less derived from the Egyptian Therapeutæ and the old Essenes of Palestine; the members, in their dress and habits, most of all resembling[1] those of the religious orders who still swarm in Tibet and Ceylon. When Christianity was suffered to ally itself with the monastic tendencies so characteristic of the eastern mind, some justification would be doubtless found in the ungenial aspect of the age and in the feelings which might naturally impel an earnest spirit to recoil from the great centres of corruption, and erect itself a shelter from the inroads of barbarians and the storms of public life. It is indisputable also that in spite of morbid symptoms[2] pointing to a different conclusion, a new character was at once imparted to this foreign mode of life by contact with the principles of the Gospel; and that, being thus ennobled, the monastic institute was frequently converted by the gracious providence of God into an apt and salutary agent for the training of the Christian scholar and the propagation of the Christian faith. Yet after all such benefits are estimated at their very highest worth, monasticism remains in its idea and essence inconsistent with the proper genius of revealed religion. It can draw no sanctions from the writings

no genuine fruit of Christianity.

[1] See Elphinstone's *India*, p. 107.

[2] The histories and legends of the fourth and following century abound in illustrations of the lamentable errors and extravagances resulting from the prevalent passion in favour of monasticism. Some examples are collected by Neander, *Ch. Hist.* III. 337 sq. He particularly draws attention to the sect of Euchites, who, as he reminds us, constituted the first order of 'mendicant friars' (p. 342) within the pale of Christianity.

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of the Old Testament[1]; it is repugnant to the spirit of the New. Though Christianity is found to be unsparing in its condemnation of all forms of worldliness, and though it teaches as was never taught before 'a total separation from all bonds considered as merely earthly,' it has nevertheless repudiated the heathenish idea[2] that any creature of God is evil in itself, or is, in other words, the product of ungodlike beings like the Gnostic demiurgus. Christianity so far from doing violence to any of our natural duties and relationships has consecrated all of them afresh; so far from labouring to pluck up the instincts and affections proper to humanity, it renders them more true and sensitive, because it renders them more Christ-like; purifying and refining and ennobling. Christianity, again, forbids the spiritual warrior to throw down his arms and quit the post of danger and of duty. His vocation is to benefit the world by his example to be *in* it, but not *of* it, and, himself made luminous by fellowship with Christ, to 'let his light so shine before men, that they may see his good works, and glorify his Father who is in heaven.' And such was also the conviction of the early Christians. When the heathen were disposed to charge them with indifference to the practical

[1] It is worthy of notice that when Beda was requested by his friend, the bishop of Hexham, to compile an exposition of the first book of Samuel, he felt himself constrained to use the allegorical method of interpretation, because, as he remarked, the literal would no more apply to persons who alone were in a condition to profit by his labours; 'quibus ecclesiasticæ vitæ consuetudine longe fieri ab uxoris complexu et cœlebes manere propositum est.' *Works*, ed. Giles, VII. 369.

[2] Dr Kay, Principal of Bishop's College, Calcutta, has recently discussed this subject, with special reference to Hindu theories, in his excellent essay on *The Promises of Christianity*, Oxf. 1855.

business of society and the requirements of the state, the accusation was indignantly rejected by their ardent and severe apologist[1]: 'We are no Brachmans,' he could add, 'nor Indian Gymnosophists, dwellers in woods, estranged from the affairs of life. We know that our duty is to give thanks for every thing to God, the Lord and the Creator. We are far from wishing to repudiate any one of His works. We are temperate, it is true, and learn to use without abusing.'

Hinduism and Christianity in their ultimate consequences.

(3) But granting, for the sake of argument, that real and profound resemblances did often come to light in the development of the religions we have just considered; granting that some points of contact can be shewn to have existed in the growth of Bráhmanism and Hebraism on one side and of Buddhism and Christianity on the other: granting even, as one writer has of late contended, that there is as much in the records of Hindu systems 'of what was parallel, as of what was antagonistic to the Gospel[2],' let us test these suppositions in a different way, and measure the alleged affinities by following out the principles from which they are believed to flow into their logical consequences and their practical results. Now Bráhmanism, as understood by all philosophers, was uniformly striving to obtain exemption from the liability

[1] Tertullian *Apologet.* c. XLII. The whole passage is remarkable: 'Sed alio quoque injuriarum titulo postulamur, et infructuosi in negotiis dicimur: quo pacto homines vobiscum degentes, ejusdem victus, habitus, instructus, ejusdem ad vitam necessitatis? Neque enim Brachmanæ, aut Indorum gymnosophistæ sumus, sylvicolæ et exules vitæ. Meminimus gratiam nos debere Domino Deo Creatori [cf. 1 Tim. iv. 3, 4]; nullum fructum operum ejus repudiamus: plane temperamus ne ultra modum aut perperam utamur.'

[2] Prof. Jowett, *Epistles of St. Paul*, &c. II. 385, 386. Lond. 1855.

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to repeated births: its ultimate effort was to give such kinds of knowledge to its votary as enabled him to say, 'I am Brahma,' 'I am All that is.' As soon as ever this exalted standing has been gained, the transmigration of the spirit ceases; but exactly at the point where the resemblances to Christianity might be expected to attain their fulness, the divergence is most fundamental and entire. The act of reabsorption, every Bráhman argues, will destroy the personality of the human subject; his mental and moral organisation is utterly subverted, superseded and dissolved. 'Annihilation, therefore, as regards the individual being is in Bráhmanism as much the ultimate destiny of the soul as it is of the body, and "Not to be" is the melancholy result of the religion and philosophy of the Hindus[1].' And if the end of all their mighty speculations be thus cold and desolating, what shall be our judgment of the younger system of philosophy, which, affecting to restore and purify the ancient creed, reduced it to more dismal blanks, and lengthened out the awful series of negations? The common cry of Buddhism was: 'It is transient; it is wretched; it is void.' With these reflections on the emptiness of all around him, the philosopher was labouring to appease the hunger of the human spirit; or if he ventured to discourse of future recompense and liberation from the evil of our present lot, the goal to which he ever pointed is the state where all the elements that enter into our idea of being will be utterly exhausted and burnt out. The heaven of philosophic Buddhism is *nirváṇa.* 'The mighty efforts of science in the ancient

[1] Prof. Wilson, *Lectures*, p. 65.

world have only issued in the forming of a vast and universal abstraction. They gave birth to Buddhism, a system in which there is no longer more than one sole existence, the Absolute,—a system, and in which this same existence is the infinite Void resembling non-existence. Here, then, is the furthest bound that could be reached by science, when applied to spiritual and divine things; it is the deification of Nothing[1].'

On the other hand, we cannot fail to notice how revealed religion, with each phase of its development, had grown more positive in its form, and brought men better tidings. It was eminently hopeful and constructive. It unfolded the great truth, that man is in the present life preparing for his ultimate condition; that he now begins to be what he will be for ever. It preaches more and more distinctly of the sacredness of human nature, as restored and glorified in Christ; it lays new stress on the material part of man, as wedded to his individual spirit, and as destined with that spirit to live on for ever; and thus, while Buddhism plants us in a sepulchre and extols *it* as our place of refuge from all human sorrows and all burdens of the flesh, the Gospel rolls away the stone from the door of the sepulchre; it makes us free indeed, and points us to the ultimate 'redemption of the body' and the glorification of our whole humanity.

Buddhism, as a popular religion.

It is far, however, from my wish, in charging Buddhism with those fearful consequences, to deny or question the amount of social benefit resulting from its propagation in some parts of central and eastern Asia. Popular Buddhism, intermingled,

[1] Gabriel, *Théodicée Pratique*, p. 84. Paris, 1855.

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as it is, with older maxims and more positive traditions, is far better than the nihilistic Buddhism of philosophy: and, accordingly, in this, as in some other cases where the territory invaded by the new religion was before in the possession of a ruder and more sanguinary creed, it may have doubtless proved an engine for exalting the character of millions who embraced it, and, to some extent, may have prepared a way for Christianity[1]. But that far more powerful agencies are still required among them is apparent, from the utter inability of Buddhism[2], even where it most predominates, to satisfy the reclamation of man's conscience, and to banish the hereditary demon-worship and the vulgar deprecation of the serpent[3].

One-sidedness of eastern speculations.

(4) There is one more special point of view in which the truths of Christianity may be most forcibly contrasted with the best and brightest products of eastern speculation. All these varied products, estimated at their highest value, were but faint approximations to the sum of living and life-giving

[1] Upham has the following note on a passage in the *Sacred Books of Ceylon*, II. 54, which inculcates the greatest tenderness in treating animals: 'Although the present state of Buddhism properly excites our strongest interest and exertions to turn its followers from the blindness and selfishness of its modern tenets to the brightness of the Christian revelation: yet, in this passage, as well as in the simple offerings of fragrant perfumes and flowers, *contrasted with the cannibalism and serpent- and demon-rites* it supplanted, the Buddhist doctrine must be esteemed to have been a great blessing and amelioration.' Wuttke, in like manner, rejoices to record the humanising influence of Buddhism when introduced, in connexion with other creeds, among the brutal hordes of Chingiskhan (I. 248). Tennent makes the same admission in reference to all the countries of eastern and central Asia. He says (*Christianity in Ceylon*, pp. 203, 204) that it was 'an active agent in the promotion of whatever civilisation afterwards enlightened those races by whom its doctrines were embraced.'

[2] 'Der Hülle ist geblieben, der Geist gewichen: der Buddhismus est jetzt eine Mumie.' Wuttke, II. 590.

[3] *e.g.* Tennent, as above, p. 232.

verities transmitted to us from the Founder of the Christian Church. When brought into comparison with the Gospel, they are poor and meagre, partial and one-sided. He who watches some of the more mighty fluctuations of the Hindu spirit, in its effort to escape from speculative difficulties and solve the awful riddles by which it is oppressed, will see it here and there approaching, if not touching, a great line of thought, which, when pursued, might possibly have issued in the scriptural solution; yet ere long the cheering hopes which progress of this kind might foster are all doomed to disappointment. The speculator seems to be diverted from his proper object by the intervention of some fresh chimera or some puerile conceit; he loses his mental balance, and the fruit of all his metaphysics is a maimed or transcendental theory of the universe repugnant to his moral instincts. Thus, how much soever we may be disposed to chafe at these phenomena of heathenism, the fact remains indisputable, that if we add together and combine all single truths elicited by the profoundest thinkers in the various schools of Bráhmanic philosophy, such contributions are all very far from making up the circle of Christian theism; they cover only some few corners of the field of revelation[1].

Hindu ideas of God and the universe;

For example, He whom Christians worship is a Being higher far, and far more truly God-like,

[1] Cf. Dean Trench's *Hulsean Lectures* (1846), p. 58: 'And thus each of the great divisions of the Gentile world had but a fragment, even in thought, of the truth: the Greek world, the exaltation of manhood; the Oriental, the glorious humiliation of Godhead: and thus, each of these, even as a speculation, was maimed and imperfect. These systems, so far from providing what men needed, had not satisfactorily and on every side even contemplated what he needed; much less had they given it.'

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than the worthiest of Hindu conceptions. These, indeed, are not unwilling to recognise the main distinction drawn in Holy Scripture between the subject and the object,—the finite and the infinite. They all regard the perfect extrication of material from immaterial as the end and aim of true philosophy. While rejecting or ignoring the idea of created spirits[1], as distinct from emanations, they are all in favour of the doctrine of a great and universal Soul,—*the* substance, *the* reality. Some, moreover, have contended that this Great Soul is one, or simple; others, that it is resolvable into parts, and therefore multiform and manifold; yet all of them agree in treating it as the original and self-dependant Something, over and beyond which is no other entity; they are alike desirous to exalt it far above the possibility of future contact with the transient and phenomenal. To this supreme and all-embracing Spirit the Védántins assign not only an eternal subsistence, but also many of the specific properties which enter into our idea of personality, as intelligence, volition, and the like.

how opposed to Christianity.

Yet here the many points of similarity between their system and the Christian are exhausted, and we enter on a startling contrast. The Védántins[2], on the one hand, labour to identify the glorious Spirit of the universe with His own production, and, in order to effect this, question the reality of the external world, and treat it as illusive; on the other hand, they totally repudiate the idea of individual existence, or of personality attaching to all rational creatures, and securing to each man the

[1] See *Aphorisms of the Yoga*, ed. Ballantyne, Part I. p. 63.

[2] See a recent article in the *North British Review*, No. 49, p. 224.

power of self-determination. A second school, or the Nyáya, recognises the personal character of God more fully; it ascribes to Him such attributes as will, activity and intelligence; but no account whatever is taken by it of His moral government, His fatherhood, His providence, His justice, or His mercy. In this school, again, where true subsistency is granted to the world of matter, and where finite souls are recognised, the origin of both is carried backward to eternity, while all the mental and corporeal faculties possessed by human beings in one stage of their existence are in no case held to be essential parts of them, and, as such, infinite in duration. The Sánkhya system, as we saw already, occupied, in some particulars, a middle place among the jarring tenets of Hindu philosophers. It regarded matter as a real aggregate of qualities; it recognised a spiritual essence gifted with a species of volition; it pleaded even for the personal distinctness of all human souls; yet, on the other hand, it went so far as to attribute the government of the world entirely to the operation of physical agents, and made Spirit, whether human or Divine, a mere spectator in some gorgeous and gigantic drama. Indeed, the one school of Hindu philosophy among whose tenets the idea of a Divine providence was clearly and consistently developed is the latest modification[1] of the Sánkhya system; and even this, I should again remark, might be indebted for its higher characteristics to some intercourse with Christianity.

A fresh specimen of one sidedness.

Another instance of the general inability of Hinduism to contemplate religious truth under

[1] Above, p. 52.

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more than one of its manifold aspects was furnished by the *Bhagavad-Gítá;* which, when its large and comprehensive spirit is remembered, might be deemed the least of all amenable to this censure. I have before alluded to the stern and naked Pantheism which it preaches; but the want of balance in its author is no less strikingly apparent in discussing moral questions. So long as he is aiming merely to destroy the errors of an older creed,—so long as he exposes the narrowness, the spiritual pride, the dreamy indolence, and inefficiency of the Yoga-system, his criticism is often most acute, his logic overwhelming; but as soon as ever he attempts to cure the evil he complains of, it is manifest that the remedy is utterly inadequate: it is a tissue of self-contradictions, a huge mass of unrealities. The genuine devotee, the *Karma-yogin,* is to suffer and to act in every case without emotion and without regard to consequences. He must pluck up all within him that may serve to foster the illusions of the human and that interferes with the development of the divine: affections, be they pure or impure; instincts, whether high and noble or unworthy and corrupted; sympathies, inwoven though they be with all the innermost fibres of his being; and when at last he yields assent to the unnatural conclusion that the real dignity of man consists in utter abnegation of self-consciousness, he rises to the fulness of his ultimate condition,—absorbed in breathless calm and frigid apathy, a stranger to the impulses of nature, dead to all the duties and enjoyments of religion.

Tendencies to degeneracy inherent in Bráhmanism.

But, further, it is prominently brought before us in the annals of Hinduism, that the highest

minds have always been most prone to drift away from the positions of their own acquiring, and have gradually relaxed their hold on the more spiritual portions of the ancient creed. For instance, all the loftier thoughts of God were once connected with a special veneration of the first member of the Hindu triad. Sacerdotal A'ryans stood in a peculiarly close relation to Brahmá; they were esteemed the privileged offspring of his head; and, therefore, if the great idea of unity was ever to be vindicated from the ravages of Polytheism, the natural way to such a restoration was by passing upward from the Bráhman to Brahmá, and thence to Brahma, the pure Spirit of the universe; the lower emanation serving as an index to the higher, and this again directly guiding to the Source of all created being and the simple Origin of all things. But so far were Bráhmans, as an order, from desiring such recovery, that they gradually abandoned their belief in one divine Administrator of the world[1]; and, instead of seeking refuge in the worship of Vishńu, whose milder incarnations were attracting to his altars the more gentle souls of the community, the members of the sacerdotal class selected for their patron-god that very inmate of the pantheon who had long been dreaded as the primary cause of desolation, and is worshipped as the animal[2] divinity of modern Hindustan. The

[1] Elphinstone's *India*, pp. 90, 101. 'The opinion of the vulgar,' he remarks, 'is more rational than that of their teachers: they [the vulgar] mix up the idea of the Supreme Being with that of the deity who is the particular object of their adoration, and suppose him to watch over the actions of men, and to reward the good and punish the wicked.'

[2] This peculiarity is sufficiently indicated by the fact that Śiva, since the 8th or 9th century of our era (cf. above, p. 24, n. 1) has been

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Bráhman is, in other words, the special votary of Śiva,—of him who is invested by popular imagination with most hideous and appalling attributes,—of him who is described in their Puráńas[1], 'wandering about, surrounded by ghosts and goblins, inebriated, naked, and with dishevelled hair, covered with the ashes of a funeral pile, ornamented with human skulls and bones, sometimes laughing, sometimes crying.' I should also add, for the completion of this melancholy picture, that the votaries of Śiva, and still more of Déví, his consort, who is singly venerated by a large proportion of the people in Bengal, are ready to undergo excruciating tortures in honour of their divinity. 'Some stab their limbs and pierce their tongues with knives, and walk in procession with swords, arrows, and even living serpents, thrust through the wounds; while others are raised into the air by a hook fixed in the flesh of their backs, and are whirled round by a moveable lever, at a height which would make their destruction inevitable, if the skin were to give way[2].'

The remedy supplied in Christianity.

5. But, turning from these dark and ghastly spectacles, which seem to be among the ripest products of the Pagan mind of India, it is most consolatory to reflect that there is still within our reach the grand corrective and the sovereign antidote.

While heathen systems are unequal to the

worshipped under the symbol of the phallus (or *linga*), intimating perhaps that his destructive powers have always reference to some future reproduction.

[1] Elphinstone, p. 89. It is also very remarkable that Śiva-worship, notwithstanding the apparent incompatibility, has in later times been found in close alliance with Buddhism; Stuhr. I. 209.

[2] *Ibid.* p. 90.

work of rectifying the infatuations of the human spirit and of cancelling human guilt,—while, even at the best, the authors of those systems can only here and there find out some fragmentary truth, but are all powerless in determining its precise relation to other verities or binding them together in one definite body of belief, the Gospel has at length successfully encountered the great problem; it has furnished what must ever be regarded, even from a 'rational'[1] point of view, the only fitting and profound solution.

It does not, indeed, profess to clear away all shades of intellectual difficulty: the imparting of a merely speculative satisfaction was never made a primary object in the plan of its great Author. It is even ready to acknowledge, by the lips of an Apostle, that, if measured not by present, but ulterior standards of illumination, we see only 'through a glass,' while that which we behold is still encompassed with 'enigmas' (1 Cor. xiii. 12). Yet, compared with all the previous legacies of God, the Gospel is a boon immeasurably vast, incalculably precious. On the one side, it has clearly taken into its account of man, not some, but *all* the factors of his complex being, and, in harmony with this conception, it asserts, as no anterior system had been able to assert, the primal dignity of human nature, and, still more, the permanence of human personality. On the other side, the Gospel harmonizes and collects together in one focus all

[1] That this view of Christianity is neither novel nor unworthy, may be seen in the *Ars Generalis* of the excellent Raymund Lull, the philosophic missionary of the 13th century; on whom see Neander, *Ch. Hist.* VII. 83 sq.

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the scattered and enfeebled rays of truth concerning God and His relation to the creature. It produces them in their original unity and fulness, not as fragments isolated from the other truths which are essential to their rightful action and their just interpretation, but as one coherent, living, and organic whole. In this, indeed, we recognise a leading aim and characteristic of the Gospel. It is far from seeking to establish the reality of spirit by denying the reality of matter. It is far from elevating human souls in such a way as to annihilate the human body. In the world of thought it does not so insist on the objective as to question or deny the subjective. It does not so discover God in nature as to miss Him in the province of the supernatural or exclude Him from His temple in the mind and heart of man. It does not so maintain the power and privileges of the corporate as to cripple or suppress the action of the individual. It never so proclaims the monarchy of God as to deprive the human agent of his self-determination, and thus make him irresponsible. It never so expatiates on the details of the future kingdom as to dazzle our imperfect understanding or blind us to the duties of our present lot. There is, in other words, a marvellous and majestic balance in the doctrines which the Gospel has been authorised to bring before us; and the point round which that balance is effected, or as seen from which all other elements in the Christian system have derived their mutual fitness, is the glorious truth[1], announcing how the Word, who is with

[1] 'We say that the divine ideas which had wandered up and down the world, till oftentimes they had well-nigh forgotten themselves and

God and is God, has verily assumed our human nature, and how God in Him is 'reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing unto them their trespasses.' The Incarnation, while it forms the turning-point of universal history, is more especially the life and marrow of all Christian dogmas. Wheresoever it has been distinctly apprehended by the reason and digested in the soul of man, there is an end of creature-worship. Those ineradicable instincts of our nature which had driven so many of the pensive spirits of the ancient world to fashion for themselves elaborate theories of transmigration, and, through consciousness of their demerit, to persist in torturing out the remnants of their evil passions, find in Christ their proper object and their permanent satisfaction. He whose life is 'hid with Christ in God' is able to approach the throne of grace with holy confidence; he looks forward to the world invisible with awe indeed, but with no abject shrinking, and no slavish terror; his unswerving hope is to be there 'accepted in the Beloved,' who has gone as our Forerunner to the inmost glories of the sanctuary; 'who ever liveth to make intercession for us.' 'Taking to Himself our flesh, and by His incarnation making it His own flesh, He hath now of His own, although from us, what to offer unto God for us[1]'.

St Paul's mode of treating heathenish interpolations.

'In Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily; and ye are filled up in Him.' Thus

their origin, did at length clothe themselves in flesh and blood: they became incarnate with the Incarnation of the Son of God. In His life and person, the idea and the fact at length kissed each other, and were henceforward wedded for evermore.' Dean Trench, *Hulsean Lectures*, (1846,) p. 20.

[1] Hooker, *Eccl. Pol.* v. LI. 3.

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argued the great Doctor of the Gentiles, who, in writing to the Phrygian Church (Col. ii.), was under the necessity of checking one of the most early manifestations of that ethnic spirit which ere long expanded into Gnosticism, and threatened to degrade the Gospel of his heavenly Master into one of the effete philosophies. The object of the misbeliever at Colossæ was not, perhaps, so definite as this; he may have merely sought to blend with Christianity a number of Judaical observances, whose meaning had been swallowed up in evangelic institutions. Yet his aim was also to resuscitate the past and reinaugurate the reign of shadows. He was anxious, in a spirit of assumed humility, and as the fruit of visions claimed especially for himself, to introduce the worship of the angels and of other finite emanations, like the Indian *dévas;* while, to finish the incongruous compound, he was pleading for a class of disciplinary tenets which, in the rigour of their asceticism, would lift him almost to a level with the self-destroying *yogin* of the East.

But how, in such a case, did the Apostle combat the pretensions of 'philosophy and vain deceit'? He reasoned with still greater urgency for the transcendent Headship of the Word Incarnate,—for that 'truth of truths' which, lying at the very core of Christianity, was the first to suffer from attacks of the confirmed believer in a spurious Gnosis[1]. So it was at Ephesus, where, not many years after, a denial of the Incarnation was more openly united with unchristian dread of all mate-

[1] Thiersch, *Ch. Hist.* I. 139.

rial forms of being, and commended to the undiscerning by extreme asceticism of life (1 Tim. iii. 16—iv. 5). The fautors of that early error were, accordingly, warned by the Apostle of the consequences that were sure to flow from their attempted intermixtures. They were taught how every project for combining with a supernatural revelation the theosophy of the Essene, or the self-torture of the Hindu hermit, was derogatory to the honour of our blessed Lord, was utterly at variance with the genius of the perfect system He had planted. They were taught how Christians had been raised, by fellowship with Christ, far higher than the shadowy ordinances of the old œconomy, and, still more, could have no need of supplementary illumination from extraneous sources. They were taught how Christians, cleaving to the Head, could never be dependent on the intercession of created spirits, nor on aught so secondary and so intermediate. They were taught how the ascetical extravagances to which they had been tempted were but 'elements of the world;' traditions emanating not from heaven, but from the breast of unregenerate man, and, therefore, alien to the Law of Christ. They were admonished, most of all, (and would that such an admonition may be echoed on to every period of the Church beset by like temptations!) that, as Christ, and Christ alone, is the Fulfilment of all ancient hopes, the Substance of all ancient shadows, so all Christian *progress*, whether in the apprehension by the Church of things revealed to us already, or in wider publication of good tidings to the heart-sick millions still

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'without', must have its origin, its root, and its sustaining principle in Him 'from whom all the body, having nourishment ministered and knit together by the joints and bands, increaseth with the increase of God.'

APPENDICES.

APPENDIX I.

The Nisháđan *or* non-A'ryan *Tribes of Hindustan, and some account of their Religion.*

It is now admitted on all hands that certain primary strata of population, by whatever name they may be called, had long extended over all parts of India, when they were attacked and gradually dispersed by the incursions of the A'ryan settlers. Remnants of such original population are still found in all the various mountain-tribes, and more especially among the natives of the Dekhan, to the south of the great Vindhya-chain. In the age of Manu, or rather at the time when laws and institutes which bear his name were promulgated, the A'ryan had not been able to push further southward than the 22nd degree of north latitude, and beyond him lay a mass of human beings, who are there described as 'barbarians living in forests, and speaking an unknown tongue.' (See *Journal of the Asiatic Society*, XIII. 277, 278.) Abundant traces of their presence have been also brought to light by the publication of the Védas. In these ancient documents, one ordinary name for all who ventured to resist the onward march of the invaders, or the men of 'A'ryan colour,' is that of 'Dasyus' (cf. above, p. 23, n. 1). The same uncouth and 'irreligious' tribes are also characterized as *anagnitra:* 'those who do not tend the fire,' or 'fail to worship Agni.' Another appellation of a similar import, is *kravyád*, or 'flesh-eaters,' (κρεοφάγοι). In the following period, as represented in the literature of the Bráhmańas, the aboriginal population are thrown into the 'same category with thieves and criminals, who attack men in forests, throw them into wells, and run away with their

goods' (Prof. Max Müller in Bunsen's *Univ. Hist.* I. 346). In the Purâńas 'the inhabitants of the Vindhya mountain,' called Nishádas, are said to be 'characterized by the exterior tokens of depravity' (*Vishńu Pur.* ed. Wilson, p. 100). 'The Matsya says, there were born outcast or barbarous races, Mléchchas, as black as collyrium. The Bhágavata describes an individual of dwarfish stature, with short arms and legs, of a complexion as black as a crow, with projecting chin, broad flat nose, red eyes, and tawny hair; whose descendants were mountaineers and foresters. The Padma has a similar description, adding to the dwarfish stature and black complexion, a wide mouth, large ears, and a protuberant belly. It also particularizes his posterity as Nishádas, Kirátas, Bhillas, Bahanakas, Bhramaras, Pulindas, and other barbarians, or Mléchchas, living in woods and on mountains.' 'These passages intend,' continues Prof. Wilson (*Ibid.* p. 101, n.), 'and do not much exaggerate, the uncouth appearance of the Goands, Koles, Bhils, and other uncivilized tribes, scattered along the forests and mountains of central India, from Behar to Kandesh, and who are not improbably the predecessors of the present occupants of the cultivated portions of the country. They are always very black, ill-shapen and dwarfish, and have countenances of a very African character.' To these must also be applied the language of Herodotus, where he speaks of black and savage Indians (cf. Lassen, I. 389).

As the A'ryans by the force of conquest gradually extended their original frontiers, they would either subjugate the old inhabitants entirely and reduce them to the state of Śúdras, serfs and menials, or else would push them all into the mountain-fastnesses, or lastly drive them forward to the southern part of the Peninsula.

1. In the first case, the position of the rude Nishádas would become most wretched and humiliating. As early as the laws of Manu (ch. x.) it was ordained that—

Their abode must be outside the towns.
Their property must be restricted to dogs and asses.

Their clothes should be those left by the dead.
Their ornaments, rusty iron.
They must roam from place to place.
No respectable person must hold intercourse with them.
They are to aid as public executioners, retaining the clothes &c. of the criminals.

A class of serfs, who answer in the main to this description, still exist in almost every province of Hindustan: and the following contrasts, for which we are indebted to the pen of General Briggs (*Journal of the Asiatic Society*, XIII. 282, 283,) may serve to indicate how widely the aborigines had always differed from the A'ryan conquerors.

1. Hindus are divided into castes.
   The aborigines have no such distinctions.
2. Hindu widows are forbidden to marry.
   The widows of the aborigines not only do so, but usually with the younger brother of the late husband—a practice they follow in common with the Scythian tribes.
3. The Hindus venerate the cow and abstain from eating beef.
   The aborigines feed alike on all flesh.
4. The Hindus abstain from the use of fermented liquors.
   The aborigines drink to excess; and conceive no ceremony, civil or religious, complete without.
5. The Hindus partake of food prepared only by those of their own caste.
   The aborigines partake of food prepared by any one.
6. The Hindus abhor the spilling of blood.
   The aborigines conceive no religious or domestic ceremony complete without the spilling of blood and offering up a live victim.
7. The Hindus have a Bráhmanical priesthood.
   The indigenes do not venerate Bráhmans. Their own priests (who are self-created) are respected according to their mode of life and their skill in magic and sorcery,

in divining future events and in curing diseases: these are the qualifications which authorise their employment in slaying sacrificial victims and in distributing them.

8. The Hindus burn their dead.
   The aborigines bury their dead, and with them their arms, sometimes their cattle, as among the Scythians. On such occasions a victim ought to be sacrificed to atone for the sins of the deceased.
9. The Hindu civil institutions are all municipal.
   The aboriginal institutions are all patriarchal.
10. The Hindus have their courts of justice composed of equals.
    The aborigines have theirs composed of heads of tribes or families, and chosen for life.
11. The Hindus brought with them (more than three thousand years ago) the art of writing and science.
    The indigenes are not only illiterate, but it is forbidden for the Hindus to teach them.

2. But although a great majority of aborigines in northern India had been thus imperfectly blended with the A'ryan strangers who subdued them, others have retained a large amount of savage independence in the mountain-fastnesses to which they had retreated (*e. g.* the Bhils, the Mirs, the Khulis, the Goands: cf. Prichard, *Researches*, IV. 166 sq.). Every year is adding to our knowledge of their general habits as well as of their language and religion: and it is gratifying to notice that the best informed of modern writers on the subject are more and more agreed as to the oneness of the stamp impressed on all the aborigines of India, however multiform and scattered at the present day. That general stamp is said to be 'Mongolian' (Prof. Max Müller, as above, p. 348). The various tribes appear to have issued, like their A'ryan successors, from the northern parts of Hindustan, and to have all spoken a language belonging to the Tamil (or Turanian) as distinguished from the Sanskrit (or Indo-European) stock. Recent occurrences have brought the English government into collision with one of these

hill-tribes, the Sontáls, who are scattered over the country in considerable numbers from Cattack to Bhagalpur (see *Journal of the Asiatic Society*, as above, p. 285): but the most copious and interesting account of the religious character and condition of the whole group, is furnished in a memoir by Captain (now Major) S. C. Macpherson (*Ibid.* pp. 216—274). The title of his paper is *An Account of the Religion of the Khonds in Orissa* (*i.e.* Uria-desa, 'land of the Urias,' lying between the eastern mountains of the Dekhan and the sea-coast). After citing numerous legends in illustration of the doctrines there current, Major Macpherson has exhibited the main features of the Khond religion in the following summary (p. 273): 'The Supreme Being and sole source of good, who is styled the God of light [Boora Pennu or Bella Pennu] created for himself a consort, who became the Earth-Goddess [Tari Pennu or Bera Pennu] and the source of evil: and thereafter, he created the earth, with all it contains, and man. The Earth-Goddess, prompted by jealousy of the love borne to man by his Creator, rebelled against the God of Light, and introduced moral and physical evil into the world. The God of Light arrested the action of physical evil, while he left man perfectly free to receive or to reject moral evil,—defined to be "disobedience towards God, and strife amongst men." A few of mankind entirely rejected moral evil, the remainder received it. The former portion were immediately deified; the latter were condemned to endure every form of physical suffering, with death, deprivation of the immediate care of the Creator, and the deepest moral degradation. Meanwhile, the God of Light and his rebel consort contended for superiority, until the elements of good and evil became thoroughly commingled in man and throughout nature.

'Up to this period the Khonds hold the same general belief, but from it they divide into two sects, directly opposed upon the question of the issue of the contest between the two antagonist powers.

'One sect holds that the God of Light completely conquered the Earth-Goddess, and employs her, still the active principle of

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evil, as the instrument of his moral rule. That he resolved to provide a partial remedy for the consequences of the introduction of evil, by enabling man to attain to a state of moderate enjoyment upon earth, and to partial restoration to communion with the Creator after death. And that, to effect this purpose, he created those classes of subordinate deities, and assigned to them the office—first, of instructing man in the arts of life, and regulating the powers of nature for his use, upon the condition of his paying to them due worship; secondly, of administering a system of retributive justice through subjection to which, and through the practice of virtue during successive lives upon earth, the soul of man might attain to beatification. The other sect hold, upon the other hand, that the Earth-Goddess remains unconquered; that the God of Light could not, in opposition to her will, carry out his purpose with respect to man's temporal lot; and that man, therefore, owes his elevation from the state of physical suffering into which he fell through the reception of evil, to the direct exercise of her power to confer blessings, or to her permitting him to receive the good which flows from the God of Light, through the inferior gods, to all who worship them. With respect to man's destiny after death, they believe that the God of Light carried out his purpose. And they believe that the worship of the Earth-Goddess by human sacrifice, is the indispensable condition on which these blessings have been granted, and their continuance may be hoped for; the virtue of the rite availing not only for those who practise it, but for all mankind.'

In addition to these human sacrifices, which still continue to be offered annually, in order to appease the wrath of Tari and propitiate her in favour of agriculture, there is a fearful amount of infanticide among the Khond people. 'It exists in some of the tribes of the sect of Boora to such an extent, that no female infant is spared, except when a woman's first child is female; and that villages containing a hundred houses may be seen without a female child' (*Ibid.* p. 270).

3. But, in addition to the wild and barbarous mountaineers whose creed is sketched in the foregoing extract, there was always

a large body of Nisháđan, or non-A'ryan, tribes of India who retained their former hold on nearly all the southern part of the Peninsula, and ultimately, with the aid of A'ryan influence, reached a high degree of civilization. 'We find the Dekhan occupied entirely by aboriginal races, with only a small and late sprinkling of Bráhmanic blood. Civilization there is Bráhmanic, and the native languages are full of Sanskrit vocables; but the grammar has resisted, and language has thus retained its independence' (Prof. Max Müller, as above, p. 432). Mr Caldwell, in his able work entitled *A Comparative Grammar of the Drávidian* [Tamil], *or South-Indian Family of Languages*, Lond. 1856, has disputed some of the current theories respecting this section of the non-A'ryan races of India. He doubts whether the Drávidians were in origin identical with the A'ryanised Śúdras of Northern Hindustan (p. 70), and is inclined to argue, from 'the difference which appears to exist between the Drávidian languages and the Scythian under-stratum of the northern vernaculars,' that 'the Drávidian idioms belong to an older period of the Scythian speech—the period of the predominance of the Ugro-Finnish languages in Central and Higher Asia, anterior to the westward migration of the Turks and Mongolians.' He is also convinced that the 'Drávidians never had any relations with the primitive A'ryans but those of a peaceable and friendly character; and that, if they were expelled from Northern India, and forced to take refuge in Gondwana and Dańda-Káraṅya, the great Drávidian forest, prior to the dawn of their civilization, the tribes that subdued and thrust them southwards must have been Pre-A'ryans.'

Mr Caldwell, however, does not wish to disguise the fact, that even if the Drávidians had not sunk as low as the Puráńas seem to intimate, when branding them with the name of rákshasas, or monkeys, or vile sinners who ate raw meat and human flesh, they were for a long time 'destitute of letters and unacquainted with the higher arts of life' (p. 77). In their religious worship, also, these Drávidians differed widely from the creed and usages of the Bráhmans; and, what is especially worthy of our notice, Mr Caldwell has distinctly shewn the

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similarity between the former and the practices observed for ages among the Scythian tribes of Northern Asia.

'The system which prevails in the forests and mountain-fastnesses throughout the Drávidian territories, and also in the extreme south of the Peninsula amongst the low caste tribes, and which appears to have been still more widely prevalent at an early period, is a system of demonolatry, or the worship of evil spirits by means of bloody sacrifices and frantic dances. This system was introduced within the historical period from the Tamil country into Ceylon, where it is now mixed up with Buddhism. On comparing this Drávidian system of demonolatry and sorcery with 'Shamanism'—the superstition which prevails amongst the Ugrian races of Siberia and the hill-tribes on the south-western frontier of China, which is still mixed up with the Buddhism of the Mongols, and which was the old religion of the whole Tatar race before Buddhism and Mohammedanism were disseminated amongst them—we cannot avoid the conclusion that those two superstitions, though practised by races so widely separated, are not only similar but identical.

'I shall here point out the principal features of resemblance between the Shamanism of High Asia and the demonolatry of the Drávidians, as still practised in many districts in Southern India.

'(1) The Shamanites are destitute of a regular priesthood. Ordinarily the father of the family is the priest and magician; but the office may be undertaken by any one who pleases, and at any time laid aside.

'Precisely similar is the practice existing amongst the Shánárs and other rude tribes of Southern India. Ordinarily it is the head of the family, or the head-man of the hamlet or community, who performs the priestly office: but any worshipper, male or female, who feels so disposed, may volunteer to officiate, and becomes for the time being the representative and interpreter of the demon.

(2) The Shamanites acknowledge the existence of a supreme God; but they do not offer him any worship. The same acknowledgment of God's existence and the same neglect

of his worship characterize the religion of the Drávidian demonolaters.

(3) Neither amongst the Shamanites nor amongst the primitive un-brahmanized demonolaters of India is there any trace of belief in the metempsychosis.

(4) The objects of Shamanite worship are not gods or heroes, but demons, which are supposed to be cruel, revengeful, and capricious, and are worshipped by bloody sacrifices and wild dances. The officiating magician or priest excites himself to frenzy, and then pretends, or supposes himself, to be possessed by the demon to which worship is being offered; and after the rites are over he communicates, to those who consult him, the information he has received.

'The demonolatry practised in India by the more primitive Drávidian tribes is not only similar to this, but the same. Every word used in the foregoing description of the Shamanite worship would apply equally well to the Drávidian demonolatry; and in depicting the ceremonies of the one race we depict those of the other also.'

APPENDIX II.

Coincidences between Lamaism and Mediæval Christianity.

APPEN. II.

Mr H. T. Prinsep, in his recent work on *Tibet, Tartary and Mongolia*, 2nd ed. Lond. 1852, has, with the aid of MM. Huc and Gabet's *Voyages dans la Tartarie*, &c., revived a question of some importance touching the origin of various parallelisms between Buddhism, as organised in those districts, and certain forms or usages of Mediæval Christianity. Some, at least, of these phenomena had excited the astonishment of Latin missionaries as far back as the middle of the thirteenth century, who explained them on the supposition that Lamaism was not so much one phase of Buddhism as a remnant of the influence exercised in those remote districts by the missions of the 'Nestorian' Church. In 1661 two Jesuits, Grueber and Dorville, in their return from China, penetrated far into Tibet and brought accounts of extraordinary resemblances between the faith of Lassa and of Rome. Mr Davis still more recently drew attention to them in his *Remarks on the Religion and Social Institutions of the Bouteas* (Roy. Asiat. Soc. II. 491 sq.), selecting for particular comment 'the celibacy of the clergy and the monastic life of the societies of both sexes; to which might be added, their strings of beads, their manner of chanting prayers, their incense, and their candles.' Other writers have again insisted on the strong resemblance between the hierarchy of the Lamas and that of western Christendom, particularly as we find it in the Middle Ages; the resemblance extending even to minor points of discipline and articles of dress. But such topics appear to have assumed no great importance in the eyes of Europe until Volney, and others like him, resolved to find in them a novel engine for subverting Christianity.

The question was then asked, By what hypothesis can we explain the striking correspondence between two systems which appear to be in other respects so totally independent? Is it the result of actual intercourse, or is it merely an extensive specimen of the way in which internal affinities of thought and sentiment will often clothe themselves in forms analogous if not identical? When the number, the variety, and the minuteness of the parallelisms in question are duly weighed, the latter hypothesis will hardly commend itself to the acceptance of historical critics; and accordingly I shall adopt the former. But here again, it must be asked: Did Buddhism, in this matter, borrow from Christianity or Christianity from Buddhism? Let us first hear Mr Prinsep's answer. Starting from the fact, that Gautama Buddha flourished long anterior to the propagation of the Gospel, and asserting further, on what authority I know not, that the principles of Buddhism were quite familiar in some parts of western Asia, not to say of Europe, under the guise of Pythagoreanism or Mithraism; this writer is prepared to argue that the early Christians were indebted to Buddhist converts for no small part of their ecclesiastical organisation.

'To a mind,' he says, 'already impressed with Boodhistic belief and Boodhistic doctrines, the birth of a Saviour and Redeemer for the western world, recognised as a new Boodh by wise men of the east, that is, by Magi, Sramanas, or Lamas, who had obtained the Arhat sanctification, was an event expected, and therefore readily accepted, when declared and announced. It was no abjuration of an old faith [!] that the teacher of Christianity asked of the Boodhists, but a mere qualification of an existing belief by the incorporation into it of the Mosaic account of the creation, and of original sin and the fall of man. The Boodhists of the west, accepting Christianity on its first announcement, at once introduced the rites and observances which for centuries had already existed in India. From that country Christianity derived its monastic institutions, its forms of ritual and of Church-service, its councils or convocations to settle schisms on points of faith, its

APPEN. II.

worship of relics, and working of miracles through them, and much of the discipline, and of the dress of the clergy, even to the shaven heads of the monks and friars.' Now if Christianity were thus fused with Buddhism 'on its first announcement,' we might surely have expected to find some definite notice, in the early Christian writers, of so marvellous an amalgamation; but instead of any single whisper on the subject, the tone in which these writers reprehend *all* forms of heathenism, is rigorous and uncompromising, and St Paul (as we have seen) had warned the Phrygian converts in particular against the least indulgence of a spirit such as that here contemplated.

The present view is also strengthened by our survey of the fundamental principles involved in Buddhism and in Christianity. Those principles are quite incapable of intermixture: they are mutually repulsive and annihilative. I am accordingly disposed to think that during all the time that Christianity was warring against Gnostic errors, or in other words until the doctrines taught by the Apostles were completely vindicated and established, it was totally impossible for a system such as Buddhism to affect in any sensible degree the institutions of the primitive Church. The jealousy with which she guarded the deposit of the faith would surely have impelled her to resist all compromise with heathenish observances, associated as they must have been at first with heathen doctrines. That such jealousy, however, was relaxing in the fourth century of our era is too plainly manifest in the writings of the period; and I think it therefore not improbable, that together with the rapid growth of the ascetic and monastic spirit may have come a disposition to accept some portions of the rites and ceremonies which preexisted in the heathen monasteries of the East. The same remark may possibly be extended to some other usages, as processions of images, worship of relics, pilgrimages, indulgences, and the like, which always have their root in ethnic rather than in Christian modes of thought. But whatever may be ultimately determined with regard to the precise development of these conceptions in the bosom of the Christian Church, it is, I think, extremely probable that some at least of the minute resem-

blances between the Buddhism of Tibet and Mediæval Christianity are directly traceable to the effect of Christian missions. Although the rise of Buddhism was very long anterior to the earliest of those missions, and although many of its peculiarities are far more ancient than the origin of Christianity itself, that form which we entitle Lamaism is found to be comparatively modern,—not older than the 13th century of the present era. Buddhism, it is true, had been propagated in Tibet six hundred years before (Wuttke, II. 559); but it was only under Kublai-Khan (A.D. 1260) that the adherents of that system were reduced under the dominion of a regular hierarchy by the appointment of the first Grand Lama, and the transfer of the spiritual government of Buddhism to his hands (*Ibid.* I. 215 sq., II. 591: Abel-Rémusat, *Mélanges Asiatiques*, I. 136, 137, Paris, 1825). At this juncture when the ancient forms and usages might naturally be made to undergo extensive alterations and be invested with a pomp befitting the inauguration of the new hierarchy, we know for certain that Tibet had been brought into immediate communication with teachers of Christianity and also with the ritual system of the Western Church. The Khans had at their court not only Jews, Muhammadans, and Buddhists, but Latin and Nestorian missionaries (see, for example, the graphic account in the *Travels of Marco Polo*, ed. Wright, pp. 167, 168, Lond. 1854; and other evidence in Neander, *Ch. Hist.* VII. 70 sq.): and in the fourteenth century of our era, the arrival of a strange Lama, who came 'from the far west' is said to have actually wrought such changes in the aspect of religious worship in Tibet. Wuttke (II. 559) conjecturing that this very Lama was himself a Christian, remarks with reference to him: 'Er änderte an den Grundlehren des Buddhismus nichts, verschärfte aber die Disciplin, änderte den Kultus und führte neue Liturgien ein; und die katholischen Missionare Huc und Gabet fanden die Ähnlichkeit mit dem katholischen Kult höchst auffallend.' The special processes by which these innovations *might* have been in almost every case effected are admirably sketched by Abel-Rémusat as above, pp. 138, 139: 'A l'époque où les patriarches bouddhistes s'établirent dans le Tibet, les parties de la

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Tartarie qui avoisinent cette contrée étaient remplies de chrétiens. Les Nestoriens y avaient fondé des métropoles et converti des nations entières. Plus tard les conquêtes des enfans de Tchingkis y appelèrent des étrangers de tous les pays; des Géorgiens, des Arméniens, des Russes, des Français, des musulmans, envoyés par le khalife de Bagdad; des moines catholiques, chargés de missions importantes par le souverain pontife et par St. Louis. Ces derniers portaient avec eux des ornemens d'église, des autels, des reliques, *pour veoir*, dit Joinville, *se ils pourraient attraire* ces gens *à nostre créance.* Ils célébrèrent les cérémonies de la religion devant les princes tartares. Ceux-ci leur donnèrent un asile dans leur tentes, et permirent qu'on élevât des chapelles jusque dans l'enceinte de leurs palais. Un archevêque italien, établi dans la ville impériale par ordre de Clément V, y avait bâti une église, où trois cloches appelaient les fidèles aux offices, et il avait couvert les murailles de peintures représentant des sujets pieux. Chrétiens de Syrie, romains, schismatiques, musulmans, idolâtres, tous vivaient mêlés et confondus à la cour des empereurs mongols, toujours empressés d'accueillir de nouveaux cultes, et même de les adopter, pourvu qu'on n'exigeât de leur part aucune conviction, et surtout qu'on ne leur imposât aucune contrainte. On sait que les Tartares passaient volontiers d'une secte à l'autre, embrassaient aisément la foi, et y renonçaient de même pour retomber dans l'idolâtrie. C'est au milieu de ces variations que fut fondé au Tibet le nouveau siége des patriarches bouddhistes. Doit-on s'étonner qu'intéressés à multiplier le nombre de leurs sectateurs, occupés à donner plus de magnificence au culte, ils se soient approprié quelques usages liturgiques, quelques-unes de ces pompes étrangères qui attiraient la foule; qu'ils aient introduit même quelque chose de ces institutions de l'Occident que les ambassadeurs du khalife et du souverain pontife leur vantaient également, et qui les circonstances les disposaient à imiter? La coïncidence des lieux, celle des époques autorisent cette conjecture, et mille particularités, que je ne puis indiquer ici, la convertiraient en démonstration.'

APPEN. II.

These observations of Abel-Rémusat, it will be noticed, are all intended to apply especially to points of ritual; and so far we may agree with him in thinking that an imitative people were at such an epoch not unlikely to adopt the usages of western missionaries: but when other writers, following in his footsteps, argue on this ground that *all* external resemblances whatever between the pagan East and Christian West are similarly due to Latin and Nestorian missions of the Middle Ages, they enter, as it seems to me, upon a hopeless undertaking.

THE END.

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